The Westcliff Diary

T: 01702 475443 **E:** office@whsb.essex.sch.uk **W:** www.whsb.essex.sch.uk

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FROM THE DESK OF THE HEADMASTER

Welcome from the Headmaster

Welcome to the new School Term and the start of the academic year. We are delighted to be joined by our new Year 7 pupils, and those who have moved from other schools in the area to join our Lower Sixth. I also offer a warm welcome to their families and can assure you that the staff and pupils at WHSB will do everything possible to help your son or daughter to settle into WHSB.

For those new to our School community, *The Westcliff Diary* is an important means of communication with pupils and their families, as well as others within our extended community, and I hope you will find the information in the pages of this edition helpful. Aside from providing a calendar of the key events taking place during the term, we also take the opportunity to include guidance on the School's procedures and systems designed to support your child's education and personal development, as well as the School's expectations. We are fortunate to enjoy strong parental support from the majority of parents, which means that together we can work to provide the very best experience for our pupils.

Settling into a new School can feel daunting or challenging, and our pastoral staff are on hand to provide support wherever needed. Our dedicated Pastoral Offices can offer guidance and/or reassurance to pupils at any stage of their time with us, and they should not hesitate to seek that support should a need arise.

Celebrating 100 Years with Old Westcliffians

You will have noticed from communications during recent months that we have a special celebration planned for September as we mark the 100 years since former pupils at the School set up the Old Westcliffian Association, a structured means by which they could keep in touch with each other and their School. There are many ways in which our former pupils keep in touch – some through our networks, others through personal links – and we are delighted to welcome many Old Westcliffians back to the School from time to time as they offer their support to current pupils.

The celebration we have planned is a means by which former pupils can gather to mark the occasion, and by which the School can offer its thanks to those Old Westcliffians who have supported them over the years, whether through lectures, careers advice, a work placement, general guidance, or a generous donation. It will also enable us to celebrate the benefits of maintaining friendships and connections beyond a pupil's time at this School.

We are looking forward to welcoming Old Westcliffians, governors, staff, pupils, parents, and other friends of WHSB through our doors on Saturday 12 September, to share in our celebration.

I would like to record my thanks to some members of staff who have worked hard to support with the planning and arrangements for this event. Mr Charlie Hadley has provided outstanding support in the design of invitations, flyers, videos, our commemorative programme, and other materials. He has also applied his talent and creativity towards preparing the material for special displays for this occasion - displays which will, following the celebration, form permanent displays around the School corridors and in other areas so they can be enjoyed by current pupils and visitors. In preparing material for the displays, we have also been ably supported by Mr Edmund Griffiths, an Old Westcliffian, who last year worked as an Administrative Assistant before taking up his place at the University of Birmingham. I am grateful too for his excellent support.

I would also like to thank Mrs Jemima Clarke for her tireless work in preparing material for circulation, for her tremendous input into the arrangements for 12 September, and her support in connection with the booking system and dealing with related queries. Equally, I am most grateful to Ms Sarah Cleave for lending her skill and creativity towards the designs and decorations for the School Hall – the venue for our afternoon tea – as it is set to look fabulous.

Such an occasion must have musical entertainment and, in this regard, I offer my thanks to Mr Alex Wood, our new Director of Music. An Old Westcliffian himself, Mr Wood has offered superb support in preparing the music, and in rehearsing students in the weeks leading up to the event. Similarly, we shall be supported on the day by members of our Combined Cadet Force, both in terms of the organisation and the displays, and I am most grateful our Contingent Commander Lt Col A Baggs for his planning and preparation in this regard.

Finally, I would like to thank our generous sponsors who have donated funds to help ensure our event is a success; our principal sponsor Paul Robinson Solicitors LLP, and other generous donors including Preou, Nourish, Surridge, and Judicium.

I look forward to sharing this special day with many of our friends.

With thanks to our generous sponsors of
The Old Westcliffian Association's Centenary Celebration

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Support from Old Westcliffians with Extra-Curricular Provision

Pupils at the School are most fortunate to benefit from the advice and guidance of our alumni. This continues each term, significantly enriching our extra-curricular offer to pupils. It is not possible for me to include details of all such provision here, but I would like to thank those Old Westcliffians who continue to lend their support, making a meaningful difference in relation to our current pupils' preparations for Higher Education, training and employment.

Examples of this support last term included visits from members of our alumni community who took part in the 2026 Oxbridge Conference, offering valuable, first-hand advice and guidance to current students aspiring to follow in their footsteps. We are also grateful to those Old Westcliffians currently studying either Medicine or Dentistry at university, who returned to the School last term to participate in a Question and Answer panel for the Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary (MDV) Society at WHSB. So many of our Sixth Form students aspire to study Medicine or Dentistry and the insight offered by our alumni is invaluable in supporting our students to make informed and strategic choices for their university applications.

I am also grateful for Mr Terry Birdseye, Old Westcliffian and President of the OWA, for attending as Guest of Honour at our annual Combined Cadet Force Pass Off Parade and Mess Dinner last July. The OWA has given great encouragement and support to the CCF since its establishment, and we were delighted to welcome Mr Birdseye on this important occasion last term.

Remaining with news concerning our alumni, and indeed the CCF, last term I was delighted to receive news from Mr Jonathan Bleakley, former Contingent Commander of WHSB's Combined Cadet Force, who left the School in August 2024 and is now training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to join the Army's Chaplaincy Service. Also currently training at Sandhurst are former pupils and WHSB cadets, Hugo Johnson, Hassan Safraz, Carter Bray, and Isaiah Akinlabe, and I hope you enjoy the photograph shared here.

Developments to School Facilities

During the Summer Term we were able to complete works to replace our tartan

Alumni studying Medicine or Dentistry return to WHSB to support students aspiring to study Medicine

2025 Oxbridge Conference: Old Westcliffians lend their support

athletics facility which came into its own for Sports Day in July. This project would not have been possible were it not for the legacy of Old Westcliffian, Barry Coker, whose generous support will enrich the experience of sports teaching and training for pupils at WHSB for many years to come. This is a facility which benefits nearly every pupil attending the School, as it not only provides a training resource for our top athletes, but is also used for teaching during timetabled Physical Education lessons.

Replacing and upgrading facilities at the School is becoming more challenging and many projects are having to be put on hold due to declining funding in the Education sector. Mr Rothon, our Director of Finance and Accounting, has included within this edition some information on how Old Westcliffians, parents, and friends of the School can help us to plug gaps in funding through donations and support. Please do refer to those details (pages 16 and 17) and do not hesitate to contact us if you believe you can assist.

In recent years we have made provision to upgrade the School Hall, and much of the redecoration was carried out last year. During the summer break, we have been able to progress that work with the fitting of the new stage and surrounding curtains. The Hall and stage are heavily used during each school day, and for evening events, and maintaining this environment to a high standard is important. I hope the entire school community enjoys the benefits of this development.

Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

The importance of participating in the rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities cannot be overstated, and this edition outlines details of many of the clubs, societies, trips, drama, music, sport, CCF, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, House activities, and subject competitions we have planned for this term. Although now issued electronically, a hard copy of *The Westcliff Diary* is provided for each family, and we hope this copy will remain accessible and visible in the home. I encourage parents to regularly discuss with your son or daughter the opportunities within each edition, how they are engaging with that offer, and how they might expand their horizons into new activities which might feel more challenging, and which will support their personal development.

I am so proud of the many remarkable achievements of our talented pupils, and their commitment to and engagement with extra-curricular provision. Through enthusiastic engagement, they demonstrate teamwork, courage, vision, and leadership qualities, and the record in each edition of *The Westcliff Diary* is a testament to their efforts.

In recent years, by popular demand from pupils, we have opted to record some of our wide-ranging programme of activities and events from the previous term though photographs. Aside from providing a wonderful record, we also believe this section can offer inspiration to other pupils who may wish to participate in those activities recorded. I hope you enjoy our pictures of the Summer Term 2026 throughout this edition, and in the final section.

National level play: The Junior and Senior Chess Team represented the School at the English Chess Federation's National Schools Final having won the regional tournaments last academic year

National School Theatre Awards (NSTA): Best Musical Solo award for William (Lower Sixth)

Trying out the School's new tartan facility

Revision for Learning

Last academic year, the School circulated Revision for Learning information to pupils and parents to provide clear guidance on effective revision techniques. It is important for pupils to recognise that revision is an ongoing process, not an activity to be left until a few months - or even weeks - before Public Examinations or internal assessments. I would encourage pupils, with the support of their parents, to establish revision routines from the very start of the academic year. Regular practice enables pupils to strengthen their revision skills and commit their knowledge and understanding to long-term memory.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Shepherd for his superb support in developing the revision materials shared with pupils and parents.

Speech Day 2026

Baroness (Sally) Morgan of Huyton

This year, our annual Speech Day will take place on Thursday 5 November, allowing us to celebrate the outstanding achievements of pupils across the School during the last academic year. As in previous years, the evening is a compulsory attendance for all students in Year 11, and the Lower and Upper Sixth, those students also being important role models for our younger pupils. We generally welcome more than 900 pupils, parents, staff and other guests to the School for this formal occasion.

Our Guest of Honour for Speech Day this year will be Baroness Morgan of Huyton. Baroness (Sally) Morgan became Fitzwilliam College's ninth Master on 1 October 2019.

Baroness Morgan grew up in Liverpool, and later studied Geography at Durham University, a PGCE at King's College London (KCL), and a part time MA in Education at the then Institute of Education. A former teacher, she has always been involved in education and, since 2005, has been Chair or advisor to a range of educational charities aiming at raising educational aspirations. She is a Visiting Professor at KCL, sits on the University Council, and is Chair of The Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

From 1997 to 2005, Baroness Morgan was Director of Political and Government Relations in 10 Downing Street, and became a peer in 2001, serving as Minister for Women and Equalities in the Cabinet Office. She was a member of the Olympic Delivery Authority Board for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, is a former Chair of Ofsted, and Vice-Chair at King's College London.

We look forward to welcoming Baroness Sally Morgan to Westcliff High School for Boys in November, and to celebrating our pupils' achievements.

Staff Changes in September 2026

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those staff members who left us in August for their dedicated service to the School.

Mr Barrett, one of our longest-serving peripatetic music teachers, inspired and supported his pupils superbly throughout his time with us. He also trained and led our Junior Jazz Ensemble for many years, enabling them to deliver outstanding performances at our Christmas and Summer Big Band Concerts.

Mrs Benett, a highly experienced and talented teacher, has contributed significantly to the Modern Foreign Languages Department during her year with us, particularly through her effective use of new technologies. We thank her sincerely for her work and wish her well in all future endeavours.

Mr Chanut joined us in 2022 as a Modern Foreign Languages Assistant and quickly impressed with his excellent subject knowledge and infectious positivity. He also made a valuable contribution to our Sixth Form pastoral system, supporting students as they navigated various challenges. Having now secured a place to train as a pilot, we wish him every success in his new career.

Mrs Allard has served the School for six academic years. Initially appointed as a teacher of Art, she stepped up to the role of Head of Art in September 2023, and under her leadership the department has continued to flourish. She also contributed strongly to the Sixth Form pastoral system as a Progress Leader. Many will also know her for her outstanding leadership as Officer Commanding the Army Section of our CCF. We wish her well in her new position at another high-performing school.

Mr Wright joined us as Head of Technology in 2017 and invested enormous energy and vision into developing our Design and Technology Department into one of the finest in the area. He has championed student engagement in national and regional competitions and enrichment programmes, enabling pupils to achieve a number of prestigious awards. Mr Wright now takes up a promoted post, joining the Senior Leadership Team of another local school, and we wish him every success.

Mr Derrick has served the School for 13 years as a highly successful Director of Music. A talented musician, he has provided tremendous leadership to the Music Department. Under his baton, ensembles such as the Symphonia and Big Band have grown in skill and confidence as he introduced ever more challenging repertoire. As a senior teacher, he played a key role through his support with the development our Life-Long Readers Programme and promoting reading through assemblies. He also enriched the cultural life of the School through numerous trips and activities. He now moves to Scotland to become Head of Arts at another school, and we wish him well.

Mr Cunneen joined the School in 2009 and has built the Economics Department into one of the largest and most successful in the School. He is a teacher held in the highest regard by his students, with superb subject knowledge that has inspired many to pursue Economics at university, and making it one of the most popular degree choices among WHSB pupils. Under his leadership, innovations such as the Economics Society and a student-led Economics magazine have flourished. Mr Cunneen has now retired from teaching, and we wish him a long, happy, and healthy retirement.

We are pleased to welcome a number of new staff to the School this Autumn Term. Mrs Shaw joins us as our new Head of Art, bringing extensive experience and expertise to the department. We also welcome Mr Stuttle, who will teach Economics and Mathematics and work closely with Mr M North, our new Head of Economics following Mr Cunneen's retirement. Mr Hawthorne joins the Mathematics Department, and Mr De Bettencourt joins the Modern Foreign Languages Department and we are pleased to welcome them too. We are delighted to welcome back Mrs Machacek to the School (Music Department), where she will work closely with our newly promoted Director of Music, Mr Wood. In addition, we welcome Mr Reeves, a highly experienced teacher, to the Design and Technology Department.

I would also like to formally record our welcome to staff who joined us earlier in the year: Miss Korbe, who became a Science Technician in January; Miss Ray-Smith, who joined us as a Cover Supervisor; Mr E Griffiths (an Old Westcliffian), who joined as an Administrative Assistant in February; Mr D Griffiths, who became one of our Sixth Form Supervisors in June; and Ms Lambert, who joined us in March as our Premises and Facilities Manager.

We are delighted to celebrate Mr Muir's achievement in completing his Level 3 ICT Apprenticeship. During the course of Mr Muir's apprenticeship, he has developed associated skills in a wide range of areas, and has supported staff and pupils in resolving technical issues and maintaining ICT systems. His apprenticeship journey has included some challenges including time away due to illness, and we congratulate him on his continued commitment to his training despite those challenges. Mr Muir has become a valued member of our ICT team and we wish him success as he continues to build his career in technology.

School Attendance

At the start of each year I take the opportunity to include a note in our autumn edition concerning the importance of full and sustained School attendance. Such attendance at School each day is important and the majority of our pupils maintain outstanding attendance records. Both they and their parents are proud to maintain strong attendance records, and that discipline is consistently reflected in pupils' progress and attainment. At WHSB we encourage each pupil to strive to reach his/her full potential during their time here, and that can only be achieved through the continuity that full attendance brings.

I would like to thank parents for their ongoing support in ensuring their son/daughter maintains a strong attendance record.

Our Senior Prefects

I am delighted to introduce our new School Captain, Oliver Street, and his Vice-Captains, Logan Farrow, Josef Machacek, Karmanya Panchal, Niamh Williams, and Nova Wu.

Farewell Performances: Mr Barrett and Mr Derrick at the Summer Band and Barbecue

Each year, the positions of School Captain and Vice-Captains attract an exceptional field of Sixth Form candidates, and this year was no different. The calibre of applications was outstanding, making the selection process both demanding and deeply impressive. I wish to commend all those who applied; their willingness to serve the School in such significant roles reflects admirable maturity and commitment. My warm congratulations go to the newly appointed team. Through their extensive contributions to School life, they have consistently demonstrated the qualities of our Learner Profile. Their exemplary records of service make them outstanding role models within our community.

Oliver has been a major contributor to the cultural life of the School since joining in Year 7. He has performed in sixteen School drama productions, including appearances at the Edinburgh Fringe. A talented musician, he performs with numerous School ensembles, including the Westcliff Singers Quartet, the Westcliff Symphonia, and the School Choir. He also served as Assistant Musical Director for the School's acclaimed production of Godspell and will take on the role of Musical Director for the Autumn production of Elf. Beyond the arts, Oliver has supported younger pupils through mentoring in Science and Mathematics, and he was awarded the prize for the most outstanding GCSE results in 2025. Oliver is a Westcliffian through and through, and I wish him every success as School Captain.

Oliver is supported by five Vice-Captains:

Logan is highly respected within the School. He has made a significant contribution to School sport and has mentored younger pupils, as well as leading one of our Mathematics teams in competition. His leadership as Form Captain has been exemplary. Josef has given outstanding service to the musical life of the School, performing in numerous ensembles and now

leading the Westcliff Symphonia; he recently enjoyed great success in conducting the Symphonia. Josef has also mentored younger pupils and supported a wide range of School clubs.

Karmanya is well known as the leader of the School's Charity Committee. Under his leadership, the Committee has organised a variety of events that have raised substantial sums for local charities. He has also supported younger pupils through our mentoring programme. Niamh has made a considerable contribution to the School, particularly in music. She leads the second violin section of the Westcliff Sinfonia and performs in many ensembles, including the Big Band and School Choir. She is also a senior cadet in the CCF Army Section and has served as a Year 7 Form Captain. Nova has immersed herself fully in School life since joining the Sixth Form. An excellent musician, she performs on piano with the Big Band. She has supported younger pupils with their studies and serves as a senior cadet in the CCF.

Together, our five Vice-Captains form a strong and cohesive team, well placed to support Oliver in his leadership. Congratulations to Oliver, Logan, Josef, Karmanya, Niamh, and Nova. I have every confidence that they will rise to the challenge of their new roles with distinction.

Headmaster

	Oliver Street School Captain	**Logan Farrow** School Vice-Captain	**Josef Machacek** School Vice-Captain	**Karmanya Panchal** School Vice-Captain	**Niamh Williams** School Vice-Captain	**Nova Wu** School Vice-Captain
Primary School	New Hall Prep, Chelmsford	Chalkwell Hall Junior School, Leigh on Sea	Down Hall Primary School, Rayleigh	Crowlands Primary School, Romford	Glebe Primary School, Rayleigh	Thorpe Hall School, Southend on Sea
Subjects at A Level	English Literature, History, Mathematics, Music	Further Mathematics, History, Mathematics, Physics	Computer Science, Further Mathematics, Mathematics, Physics,	Biology, Chemistry, French, Mathematics	Economics, French, Mathematics, Physical Education	Art, Further Mathematics, Mathematics, Physics
The most positive aspect of being a student at WHSB	The support from staff and students	The positive reputation that being a WHSB pupil brings	The diverse and large range of extra-curricular activities	The opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding beyond the curriculum	The positive attitude of WHSB pupils to life and learning	The strong sense of community amongst all groups
What I would most like to achieve in my new position at WHSB	To encourage more pupils to participate fully in the life of the School	To further strengthen the culture of participation across the school community	To further strengthen the positive attitude of the pupils to our School	To reassure pupils that their views are listened to carefully	To encourage more pupils to explore opportunities beyond the curriculum	To help give all pupils a true sense of their own self-worth
My message to our new Year 7 pupils	Enjoy the WHSB experience and make good memories	Never be afraid to ask questions because it will make you a better learner	Explore your academic interests beyond the school curriculum	Take advantage of the supportive community and do not be afraid to try new things	Try something new at WHSB as it could become a life passion	Always try to build positive relationships with the whole school community

CELEBRATING GCSE AND A LEVEL RESULTS IN 2026

Congratulations to students in our GCSE and A Level cohorts this year as we are celebrating another year of exceptional results.

At A Level, half of all entries were awarded the highest grades of A* or A. An outstanding 19% of all A Levels were awarded the top grade of A*, while an impressive 50% of grades achieved were A* or A. Furthermore, 76% of all grades were awarded at A*, A or B, underlining the continued academic excellence achieved by the School's Sixth Form students.

These superb results mean that the overwhelming majority of students are now progressing to courses at some of the country's most prestigious Russell Group universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, as well as degree apprenticeship programmes with major national and international organisations. The students will be pursuing a wide range of courses, including Medicine, Economics, Engineering, Computer Science, Music, and Law.

There were many outstanding individual achievements. 36% of students achieved A* and A grades across all their subjects, while thirteen students secured three or more A* grades. Among them were Varun Ayyappan, Jess Bates, Joseph Galvin, Daniel Gocher and Eleanor Jarrett who achieved an exceptional four A* grades.

Alongside these remarkable successes, many more students are celebrating having achieved the grades required to secure places at their first-choice universities.

Students taking GCSEs this year had much to celebrate too, having also achieved an outstanding set of GCSE results. Their results were amongst the School's best ever, with 55% of all grades at 9-8, and 74% of all grades at 9-7. A remarkable 29% of all GCSE examinations received the top grade – grade 9.

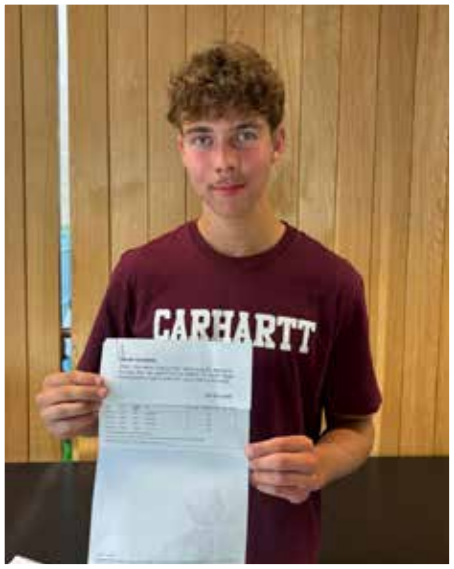
The exceptional GCSE results meant there were many outstanding performances by individual pupils. 66% of pupils achieved 8 or more 9-7 grades, and 27% of pupils achieved 12 9-7 grades. An incredible 48% of pupils achieved 8 or more 9-8 grades. A remarkable 9 pupils achieved an astonishing 11 grade 9s, with Lennon Jacobs and Daniel Kirby achieving an incredible 12 grade 9s.

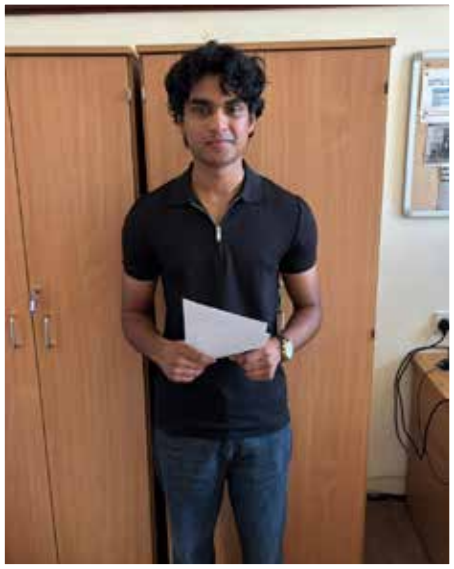
I congratulate all the students on their suberb results which reflect their hard work, determination and ambition throughout their studies. I would also like to pay tribute to our staff for the exceptional teaching and support they provide to prepare the students for their examinations.

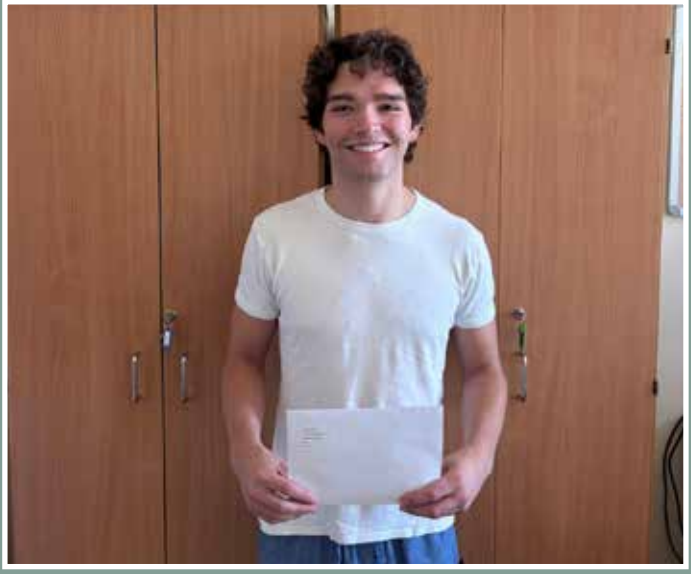
We wish all the students every success as they take the next steps in their education, training, and future careers.

Headmaster

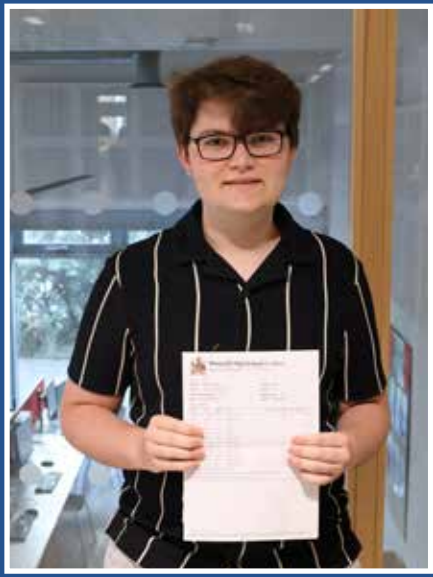
A Level

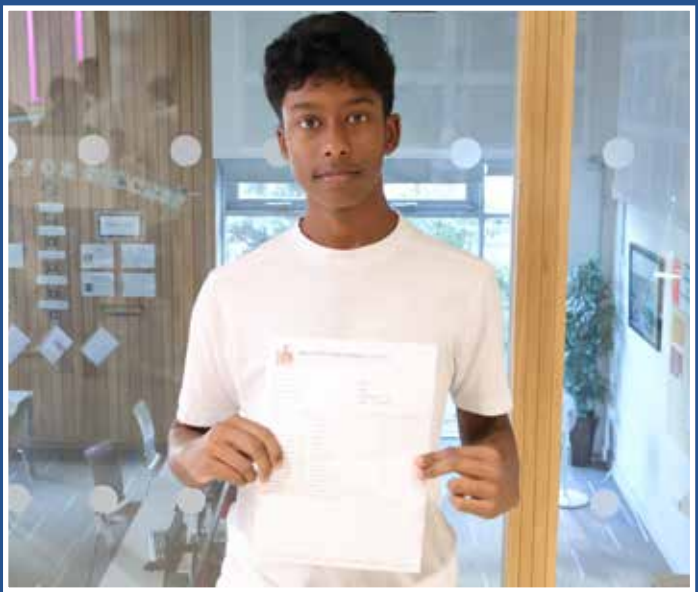


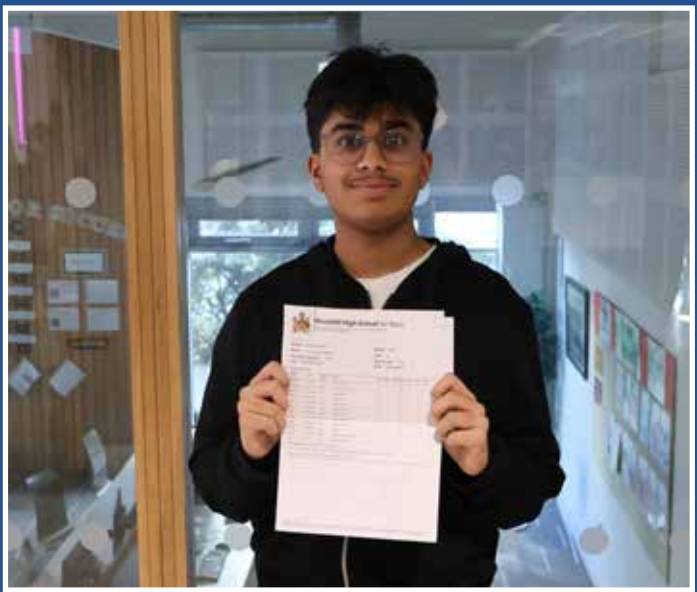




GCSE







CAPTAIN'S LOG

It is a tremendous honour to be appointed as School Captain for the 2026-27 academic year. I am incredibly grateful to be given the opportunity to serve the School and give back to a community that has given me so much over the past six years. I would first like to thank my predecessor Gabriel Williams for his guidance and support as I step into this role, and I wish him all the best for his future endeavours. I am proud to be supported in my role by a strong team of five School Vice Captains: Logan Farrow, Josef Machacek, Karmanya Panchal, Niamh Williams, and Nova Wu. Already our team has demonstrated enthusiasm and dedication to supporting School events in last year's Summer Term, such as at the Year 5 Open Evening and at the Big Band & BBQ event. While we certainly have big shoes to fill, I am confident that our team will continue to uphold the School's values while making our own positive contribution. In my role as School Captain, I aim to promote a culture in which our students challenge themselves both in and out of the classroom, support one another, and embrace opportunities that come their way. By approaching new experiences with enthusiasm and resilience, I believe we can continue to build upon the outstanding reputation of WHSB while encouraging every one of you to unlock your potential.

Perhaps my favourite aspect of life at WHSB is the vast range of extracurricular activities offered here. Whether your interests lie in Sport, Music, Drama, the CCF, academic societies, charitable fundraising, or beyond, the School's wealth of opportunities ensures there is something for everyone. At the end of last year, the Sport Colours Assembly reminded the School of the numerous sporting successes experienced throughout the academic year, while in the previous month the School proudly collected its fifth National School Theatre Award, further cementing our reputation as one of the country's most decorated Schools at these awards. The commitment and enthusiasm shown by our staff towards the extracurricular life of the School is extraordinary, and I firmly believe this is not something to be taken for granted. Whilst academic excellence rightly remains at the heart of life at WHSB, I believe extracurricular involvement is just as important for personal growth and development, and it is a fantastic opportunity to try something new. Personally, over the last six years here at WHSB, I have enjoyed being involved in several drama productions and various music ensembles, which remain outlets for my passion for performing but have also taught me key skills such as dependability, teamwork, and communication. These activities continue to challenge me, helping me to grow as a person while developing qualities that I would not have acquired in the classroom alone. So, just as I did, this year I encourage you to give a new activity a go – you may be a natural, or you may struggle at first, but ultimately it will enrich your character and experience at the School.

Making the most of these opportunities depends upon one thing: attitude. Attitude is crucial to maximising your academic and extracurricular potential. Pessimists are often right; optimists are often successful. While setbacks are inevitable, it is those who continue despite them who ultimately achieve the most. Whether you do not quite succeed in a Mathematics test as well as you wanted to, or you struggle to grasp certain concepts in lessons, resilience and willingness to persevere are hugely important attributes and establish the correct attitude to learning. The Learner Profile encourages us to be lifelong learners, and this requires a strong mentality that is not easily defeated by obstacles along the way to success. At the UK Youth Rocketry Challenge National Final, WHSB team Champagne SuperNova demonstrated this skill impressively, battling unpredictable weather and fierce competition, but their resilience and determination helped them secure one of the top two places in the competition. I further encourage all at WHSB to embody this trait as we look forward into this new academic year.

Finally, I look forward to this exciting year ahead and to seeing everyone around the School. We have numerous music concerts, drama productions, sporting fixtures, academic competitions, and charity events lined up for this year, and they promise to be exciting opportunities for all to enjoy and get involved in. I hope all students embrace experiences this year with ambition, resilience, and openness to opportunity. Together, I am confident we can continue to uphold the values that make WHSB such a powerful community. I wish you all every success for this year.

Oliver Street, School Captain

Godspell, March 2026

The Westcliff Sinfonia

KEY INFORMATION FOR NEW YEAR 7 PARENTS

With the Autumn Term now underway, we hope that your son has settled happily into life at Westcliff High School for Boys. As a School, we place great importance on ensuring a smooth transition from Primary to Secondary education. To support this, a number of structures are in place, including:

- A dedicated Year 7 playground, allowing pupils to socialise and build friendships within their Year Group;
- Fortnightly Tutorial sessions with their Form Tutor;
- Fortnightly Enrichment sessions, primarily led by the Director of Lower School;
- A two-week settling-in period at the start of term during which Conduct Card signatures are not issued for minor issues such as forgotten equipment;
- A tailored Year 7 PSHEE programme, covering areas such as managing change, personal development, politics and society, online safety, celebrating diversity, and relationships.

Key Dates

In addition, you will see in this edition of *The Westcliff Diary* several important events during the term for both pupils and parents:

- Year 7: Helping Parents to Help Their Sons - Monday 14 September 2026;
- Year 7 Activity Day – Thriftwood Scout Camp - Friday 18 September 2026;
- Year 7 Phase 1 (Baseline) Reports - Friday 16 October 2026;
- Year 7 Parents' Consultation Evening - Monday 16 November 2026.

Miss G Fairfax, Deputy Headteacher

Year 7 Testimonials

Md Jami Chowdhury, Year 8

Starting at Westcliff is the first step of an incredible adventure. Yes, day one can feel overwhelming when you are staring at a massive school map, jumping between classrooms, and managing new timetables. But by week two? Everything clicks. My own Year 7 journey has been a complete whirlwind. Westcliff packs your calendar with excitement - sports fixtures, clubs, activities, and so much more. What makes it special, though, are the teachers. Their lessons are completely immersive, driven by a passion to ensure every single pupil shines like a crystal. Whether you are diving into History trips, tackling Mathematics competitions, or taking on National Language challenges, you will never be bored. Trust me, your time at Westcliff will be an experience of a lifetime!

Arusan Anpurajah, Year 8

So, welcome to WHSB, the Grammar School that maxes you out to your full potential. Well, I can understand how you feel - it can be tricky from being the big one in Year 6 to being the smallest in Year 7. But do not worry - today I will be giving all kinds of tips to succeed in this new secondary school.

The first advice I would give you is that if you are concerned about anything, just ask - it is better being safe than sorry. The School will also back you up with giving you some equipment to keep you organised; like a planner or schedule.

So, these are some key steps on how to succeed. Push yourself to the limit, be organised, and take as many opportunities as you can.

At the start of the year, I was lost every time I went to classes and I was disappointed with my grades. However, as I progressed through the year, my grades boosted and I took my opportunities. So even when you are in your toughest times, keep going and push - it will go better than you thought it would before!

Nate Cavalier, Year 8

Top Tips

1) Make Friends: This is especially important as you can revise and help each other. You might have not fitted in in your previous school, so this is your restart button to have a better time.

2) Homework: Follow your Homework timetable and make sure you do not forget your homework at home - nor should you rush it. You put work into the 11+ so make the work your norm!

3) Revision: Revise using your homework timetable. If you do not get the homework slotted for that day, just revise a topic on that subject. Make a revision timetable - this will be beneficial for your end-of-year examinations. I know revision can be hard to settle down to sometimes but persevere and do it. A good quote is "Fail to prepare, prepare to fail."

4) Be kind: Be kind to members of staff as they only want to help. Do not be rude but try to be helpful and respectful. Treat your classmates the same way too.

5) Organisation: Make sure you are organised - do not forget stuff, try not to forget to do things, and make sure you are on time at lessons. Make sure at break you leave the playground at the right time to get to your classroom.

6) Conduct Cards and Detentions: Make sure you do everything properly, have the correct uniform. One conduct card signature is not the end of the world but once you reach two or three you might want to be careful. Follow the teachers' guidance and do not be disrespectful, and you will then be fine.

7) Lockers: make sure you use your locker well. Save yourself carrying unnecessary things by putting them in your locker when not needed and remember to get them out when you need them.

8) School Building: think of the School facing the car park and main gate. The West Side of the building are the W rooms and the East Side the E rooms. They meet each other in the Headmaster's corridor, the Hall, and Reception. The Tech Block (T rooms) is separate and so are the Science Block (S rooms) and Sixth Form Building (SF rooms).

9) Extra-curricular Activities: Westcliff High School for Boys has many clubs which are a terrific way to get involved. I go to Latin on Monday, Efood every Week A Tuesday, Star Wars Club on Wednesday, Treble Choir on Thursday, and Main School Choir on Friday. However the playground is a good place to meet friends, and the Library is an incredibly good place to read, revise, and do homework.

Zafir Chowdhury, Year 8

Coming into Year 7 can be worrying - worry of fitting in, of getting lost, and even of the older Year Groups here at WHSB. At the end of my first year here at WHSB it has been nothing but memorable. From my first day in a blazer twice my size, entering these corridors felt impossible - an enormous campus against one tiny Year 7. Worry and excitement formed an early feeling of confusion, but the students here came to my aid. You need have no worries about older Year Groups. The help of older pupils at WHSB helped me tremendously in navigating the School. With the help of Form Tutors, the staff, and the pupils here at WHSB, you will feel your worries disappear.

If I could give any tips, it would be to be organised and pack the night before. If you are worried regarding homework deadlines, talking to your teacher can sometimes get a longer deadline or make the task easier. Also, try out the many, many extra-curricular activities here as you may never know your interests and it does not hurt to try out something new. If I could sum up my first year of many to come at WHSB, it would be 'memorable and a change which will shape who I become'.

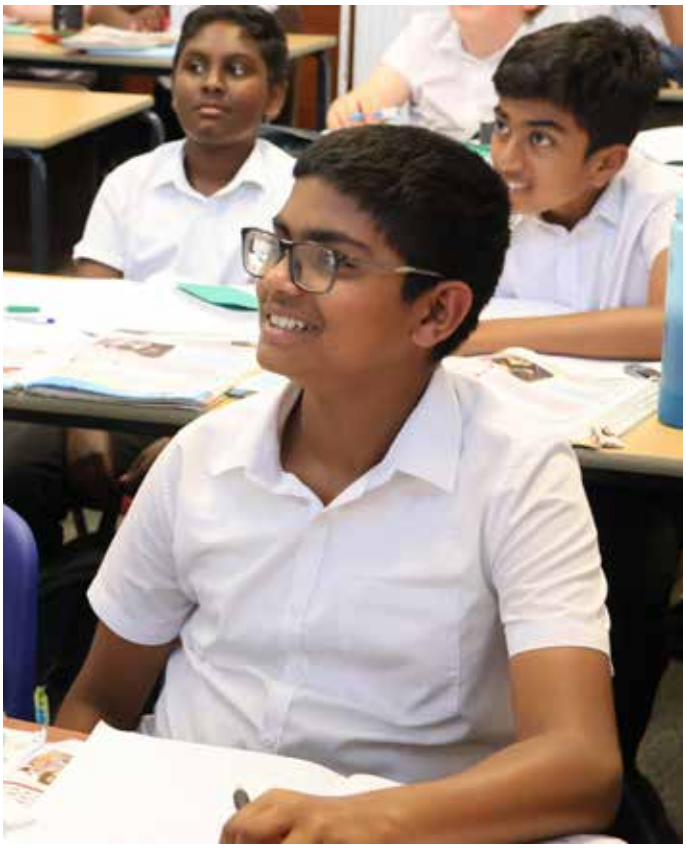
Jayden Kyei-Bamfo, Year 8

My experience in Year 7 has been amazing and has been all about trying new things. When I look at myself in September last year compared to now, I have changed a lot. I have tried new sports such as basketball and rugby, new clubs such as UNO Club, and I have been shown a lot about WHSB in Year 7.

My top tips are to be a lifelong learner - in life you are always going to learn something new and learning never stops. Secondly, always be open to new opportunities - do not be afraid to try new things, whether it is sports or new clubs, just give it a go. My final tip is always to work hard - in everything you do give 110%. Always push yourself to improve and be better.

Tristan Lawson, Year 8

My experience of Year 7 has been amazing. In Year 7, I have made lots of friends, joined clubs, and learned new things. I have had the chance to try a range of clubs and sports including rugby, cricket, chess, Beyblades, and Star Wars Club. My favourite subjects are PE, Music, and Mathematics, but I have had the chance to learn new things including German, and Art. If I could give four tips to help new Year 7 pupils, they would be: First, to try the Lunch Hall as they have a wide variety of food; secondly, you should be organised so you do not forget what you need for that day of School and to have spare equipment for that day; make sure to write all homework in your planner or somewhere you will remember; if you get hurt or anything goes wrong, speak up - teachers and your friends will listen and will help as much as they can. Lastly, you should have plenty of sleep as that helps you to do your best.



THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

WHSB PARENTS' ASSOCIATION AGM 2026
Tuesday 29 September 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Firstly a very warm welcome to all those parents/carers who are new to the School this term. Westcliff High School for Boys Parents' Association is a Registered Charity no. 1028007 and all WHSB parents/carers automatically become members of the Association when their children join the School. Led by an annually elected Committee, the aim of the Parents' Association is to enhance the education of pupils by providing necessary resources and funding whilst fostering a strong community spirit when supporting and hosting events in School.

Over the years, the Parents' Association has raised thousands of pounds through a variety of events and initiatives. Projects supported with money raised include funding towards two new minibuses, digital image transfer equipment for the Design and Technology Department, furniture for the Sixth Form Centre, new sports kit for the PE department, refurbishment of the Art Department's kiln, and sound and light equipment that is used for the multitude of events that take place in School throughout the year. The Parents' Association also supports the School at many of its calendar events throughout the year including Open Evenings for admission to Years 7 and 12 and by hosting a Welcome event for new parents in September.

Virtual meetings are held each term, with the AGM taking place during the Autumn. This year's AGM will take place online via Zoom on Tuesday 29 September from 7.30pm to 9.00pm and we encourage all parents/carers to attend, particularly those who are new to the School. This is your chance to hear how the funds raised have been used for the benefit of the School. The AGM is also when elections take place for Committee roles. We currently have openings for PA Chair, PA Treasurer and PA Secretary to represent the Association throughout the forthcoming year. Nominations should be sent in advance of the AGM for anyone wishing to stand for any of these roles for the first time. Existing Committee members wishing to stand for re-election to their current roles do not have to be nominated again.

At this year's AGM it is proposed to change the Constitution and rename the Parents' Association as Friends of WHSB. This is to reflect the diversity of modern family structures and to encompass the School's wider community. Further information will be shared this term.

As attendance recording at the AGM is mandatory, please email pa@whsb.essex.sch.uk to confirm you will be joining (or to send your apologies).

Zoom joining details together with copies of the agenda and supporting documentation will be emailed in advance of the meeting.

If anyone would like further information, or to be added to the WHSB Parents' Association Mailing List, please contact us at pa@whsb.essex.sch.uk or via the School Office 01702 475443.

WHSB Parents' Association Committee

WHSB Parents' Association: Easy Fundraising

easyfundraising
feel good shopping

Thirteen years ago, we introduced *Easyfundraising* as an additional means of raising money for the School and to date have raised over £7,000. *Easyfundraising* is a free platform that allows you to raise money for charities, schools, sports teams, and other non-profit causes when shopping online.

Easyfundraising acts as a bridge; when you shop with over 8,000 affiliated brands (for example Amazon, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Tesco, eBay, Argos, Booking.com, and Currys), the retailer donates a portion of your purchase to your chosen cause at no extra cost to you. These retailers offer free donations on purchases across fashion, electronics, groceries, and travel. Many retailers provide percentage-based donations, often between 0.5% and 5%.

Just use the links on the *Easyfundraising* site whenever you shop online and the Parents' Association will receive a free donation from every purchase you make. It really is that simple, and it is completely FREE to register. If you shop online anyway, then why not raise valuable extra funds for us by using this fantastic scheme.

All you need to do is visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk and, when you register, select Westcliff High School for Boys as the organisation you wish to support:

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/westcliffhighschoolforboys/

The more members of our School Community who choose to support us in this way, the more money we can raise for the School. Our thanks in anticipation.

Mrs J Clarke, The WHSB Parents' Association

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

The Westcliff Diary routinely references the wide range of deeply enriching activities, both curricular and extra-curricular, that are offered to WHSB pupils, and which they engage in, in large numbers. The School has always considered this wide offer as integral to its mission of developing both intellect and character in each of our young people, as represented by our Learner Profile.

It is important that we understand that financing such activities, in particular extracurricular provision, presents an ever-deepening challenge.

Government funding for schools has been reducing in real terms across a number of years, making it increasingly necessary for schools to seek alternative sources of income. As a selective grammar school, WHSB is being hit especially hard by these real-terms funding reductions. We receive the absolute minimum funding per pupil allowed under government funding guidelines, so we fare poorly compared to the majority of state schools. Funding allocations announced for 2026/27 have been extremely hard on us.

In the current funding environment, without significant financial support from the School community (parents, Old Westcliffians, and other friends of the School) offering such a varied programme of activities to pupils will no longer be possible

In recent years, the School has taken steps to promote ways in which the wider School community can assist in generating funds, but regrettably the response has been disappointing and we need your support.

Donation to the Pupil Fund

The School should like to thank all those parents and others who have previously donated or continue to donate to the School's Pupil Fund. The number of parents and friends of the School donating has, I am sorry to say, reduced quite considerably in recent years, and we are keen to revive it. As well as funding equipment for classrooms and laboratories, books for the Library, the Pupil Fund has, over the years, supported activities and pursuits including Engineering, Computing, Sport, Music, Drama, and the School's Combined Cadet Force. Donating to the Pupil Fund is a straightforward way of making a one-off, or (we hope) a regular, general contribution towards these enriching activities. Further information can be found at: *https://www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/useful-information-for-all-parents/school-development-and-fundraising*

The easiest way to make a regular donation is by setting up a standing order via your online banking, using the account details below. Alternatively, you can download a standing order form which can then be completed and submitted to your bank: *www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/finance*. Should you have any questions regarding these arrangements please do not hesitate to contact the School Bursar at *darbyn@whsb.essex.sch.uk*.

Lloyds Bank

Sort code: 30-97-84

Account number: 34480360

Account name: Westcliff High School for Boys

The School is also able to accept donations by cash, cheque, ParentPay or bank transfer directly, and it is most helpful if this is accompanied by a Gift Aid form (if applicable). Gift Aid enables the school to benefit by a further 25% of voluntary donations given, so do please remember to complete the Gift Aid Declaration form if you are an eligible UK taxpayer *https://www.whsb.essex.sch.uk/useful-information-for-all-parents/school-development-and-fundraising*.

It is important that parents understand that there is no obligation to make donations, and that all pupils can access our provision equally, regardless of whether or not their family choose to contribute.

Parent Pay Item: Voluntary Donation towards Trips and Travel

We introduced a simple way to facilitate voluntary donations towards the cost of providing travel to School activities such as sports fixtures, extra-curricular competitions, or indeed to simply recognise and appreciate the School's efforts towards providing such extra-curricular opportunities to our pupils. Parents will see this item listed in the Parent Pay system, along with existing items, when you log in as normal.

TicketSource: Voluntary Donation

We have also introduced a similar facility for voluntary donations on TicketSource, so when booking a School event, you can choose to add a donation, and your support is appreciated.

Corporate Sponsorship

The WHSB community includes almost 1,300 pupils and their families, around 140 staff members, and thousands of Old Westcliffians who read our publications, attend our events, and follow us on social media. We can offer your business or organisation the opportunity to advertise in this termly School publication *The Westcliff Diary* (distributed in both hard copy and digitised versions), and in the programmes printed for the multitude of events taking place throughout the School Year, including Annual Speech Day, Sports Day, and numerous dramatic and musical productions and concerts. We would be pleased to discuss these opportunities with you.

Anybody with an interest in supporting the School through corporate sponsorship, and or advertising, should contact Mr S Rothon (Director of Finance and Accounting), Mrs D Holley (the Headmaster's Personal Assistant), or Mrs J Clarke (Community Development Assistant), on 01702 475443.

Thank you for your support.

Mr S Rothon, Director of Finance & Accounting

Chemistry

Cricket

Drama

Chemistry

Enrichment Day

GRANGE WATERS SUMMER CAMP: ROYAL NAVY CADETS SET SAIL FOR ADVENTURE

Monday 7 – Wednesday 9 September 2026

From 7–9 September 2026, members of the School's Combined Cadet Force (Royal Navy Section) will be heading to Grange Waters Outdoor Education Centre for an exciting three-day summer camp packed with adventure, teamwork and personal development.

Throughout the camp, cadets will take part in a wide variety of challenging outdoor activities designed to build confidence, resilience and leadership skills. On the water, they will have the opportunity to experience sailing, kayaking, paddleboarding and other watersports under the guidance of qualified instructors, developing both their practical skills and teamwork in a safe and supportive environment.

Away from the water, cadets will also tackle a range of adventurous land-based activities, including climbing and other physical challenges that encourage problem-solving, determination, and communication.

The annual camp is one of the highlights of the Royal Navy Section's training calendar, giving cadets the chance to step outside their comfort zones, forge new friendships and create lasting memories while embracing the core values of the Combined Cadet Force.

We wish all of our cadets and staff an enjoyable, safe and successful camp and look forward to sharing photographs and highlights from their adventures on their return.

Lt Hadley, Royal Navy Section

LOWER SIXTH EDUCATION EVENING

Thursday 10 September 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Parents and their children are cordially invited to attend this educational evening, during which you will receive detailed information regarding the School's expectations and the support available to students as they progressively gain greater independence in their academic pursuits. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to engage with members of the pastoral and senior teams to enhance your understanding of the upcoming stage in your child's educational journey.

We look forward to welcoming you into School for this event.

Mrs K Revell, Director of Sixth Form

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION *WELCOME TO WESTCLIFF* EVENING FOR PARENTS NEW TO THE SCHOOL

Monday 14 September 2026, 6.30pm – 7.00pm

On Monday 14 September, the Parents' Association will be hosting its Annual "Welcome to Westcliff" Evening for all those parents and carers who are new to Westcliff High School for Boys. This will take place immediately prior to the School's "Helping Parents to Help Their Sons" (Year 7) Education Evening. Existing Parents' Association members will be serving refreshments in the Screens area, adjacent to the Main School Hall. This will be an informal and enjoyable evening where you can meet the Headmaster and members of staff. In previous years, this Welcome Evening has proved particularly useful in helping to answer practical questions that may have arisen once pupils have joined the School. Contact can be made both with other parents/carers whose children are in the same Form Group and with those who live in the same locality. The evening is free of charge to attend, and we look forward to meeting you. RSVP via *TicketSource*.

Mrs J Clarke, Parents' Association

YEAR 7 HELPING PARENTS TO HELP THEIR SONS

Monday 14 September 2026, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

We invite all parents of new Year 7 pupils at WHSB to attend our Helping Parents to Help Their Sons meeting. Moving from a Primary School to a Secondary School can be a daunting experience for both parents and pupils at the best of times. Routines are new, the environment is different, expectations are different, and new Year 7 pupils have a level of independence and expectation that has not always been the same in a Primary School environment.

The purpose of the Year 7 Helping Parents to Help Their Sons meeting is to help smooth that transition and give some helpful advice to parents of new Year 7 pupils to support their sons in making the best possible start to their careers at WHSB. In this meeting, there will be presentations on a variety of topics. These will include:

- Recommended routines;
- Managing organisation and homework;
- Ways to maximise progress;
- Helping when things go wrong;
- Mechanisms for support in and out of School;
- Safe and sensible use of technology;
- The link between use of technology and mental health.

We invite parents of all Year 7 pupils to attend this evening. Pupils receive their own version during Enrichment sessions and therefore should not attend.

Mr A Baggs,
Director of Lower School

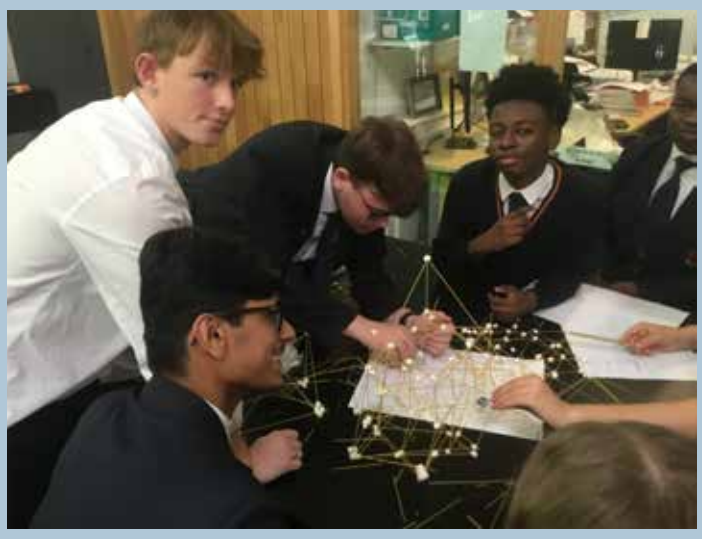
ENRICHMENT DAY FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

Friday 18 September 2026

A day spent away from the timetable, visiting a new place or revisiting a centre of particular interest, debating a moral dilemma, or rehearsing a scene for a Languages play, might look on the surface like a day of lost learning. In practice, it is often one of the most valuable days in a student's School Year. Enrichment Days, whether built around the Arts, Sport, Outdoor Learning, Science investigations, or community projects, give students something the standard curriculum often cannot - room to explore an interest without the pressure of assessment hanging over it. Freed from the constraints of the classroom, students frequently engage more deeply, ask more questions, and take more risks with their thinking than they might sometimes do in a conventional classroom lesson. A single day of Enrichment can also build resilience, teamwork, communication, and creativity - navigating a problem-solving challenge with different classmates is practising negotiation and compromise; performing in front of an audience for the first time is learning to manage nerves and project confidence. These are transferable skills that students carry into every other area of School life, and later into work and adult relationships.

This is why we put so much store in our biannual Enrichment Days, organised to provide students with opportunities both within and beyond the School walls, and why we are so grateful to the staff for organising and supporting these wonderful alternative educational opportunities for our fantastic and capable students. Some will head off for trips to Duxford, Sizewell, Nuclear Races, or Pottery making, while others will stay at School to explore options in Medicine, aspects of Science, and careers in Journalism and the Humanities. Whatever they do, we strongly encourage all students to embrace the opportunities provided and hope they are able to enjoy to the full a different day and a different way of learning.

Mr B Jeffreys, Associate Assistant Head

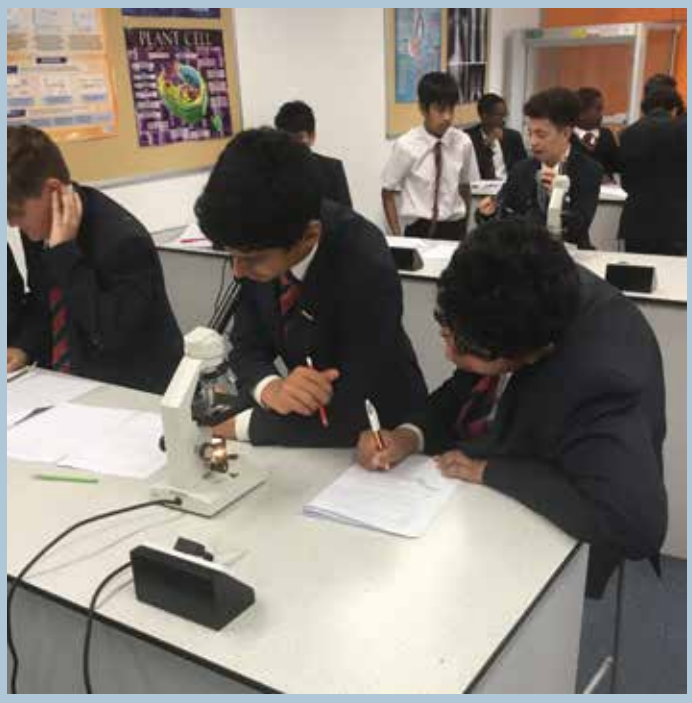


YEAR 7: TRIP TO THRIFTWOOD

On Friday 18 September, pupils in Year 7 will attend an Activity Day, held at Thriftwood Scout Camp Activity Centre in Brentwood. Taking place each year, this activity day is an important and enjoyable element of helping Year 7 pupils to settle into the School and meet other members of the Year Group. This has proven in the past to be a popular and enjoyable event, and the day plays an important part in helping pupils to transition successfully into Year 7.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

ENRICHMENT DAY FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER



YEAR 8: FORENSICS DAY

Our Year 8 pupils are set to become forensic investigators during an exciting Future Forensics Day, where science, problem-solving, and teamwork come together to provide a hands-on learning experience. Throughout the day, Forensics Access Limited will encourage pupils to step into the role of a forensic scientist, discovering how scientific techniques are used to investigate crime scenes, analyse evidence, and uncover the truth. Working in teams, pupils will tackle a series of engaging experiments and practical challenges designed to replicate real forensic investigations.

Pupils will have the opportunity to examine evidence, record observations, test hypotheses, and present their findings, developing along the way an understanding of the skills and methods used by professionals working in forensic science. Alongside the scientific activities, the day has been carefully designed to develop three of our designated soft skills:

- Teamwork – collaborating effectively to solve complex investigations and share ideas;
- Communication – discussing evidence, explaining conclusions, and presenting findings clearly;
- Time Management – planning tasks, prioritising investigations, and working efficiently within set time limits.

Future Forensics Day offers far more than an introduction to forensic science. It encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and resilience while helping pupils build essential life skills that will support them across all areas of learning and future careers. We look forward to seeing all our Year 8 pupils embrace the challenge, think like forensic scientists, and put their investigative skills to the test in what promises to be an engaging, educational, and memorable day.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser

YEAR 9: TRIP TO IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM DUXFORD

Our annual visit to the airfield and aircraft collection at Duxford, near Cambridge, is always an exciting enrichment opportunity for our Year 9 cohort of pupils, and we look forward to our return this term. Forming part of the Imperial War Museum, the exhibition spaces at Duxford are evolving from an arrangement around themes to one of periods of history, which will integrate better the historical and technological context of the aircraft. It also brings the aircraft together with the land warfare exhibits of the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum, following the closure of the Land Warfare building, and the stories of some of the people and events of the Second World War.

Static exhibits include several Spitfires, some of which are air-worthy, alongside its nemesis the Messerschmitt Bf-109, Concorde pre-production MSN 101 with its flight-test equipment still installed, and other more modern aircraft and helicopters: Avro Vulcan and York, Shorts Sunderland, English Electric Lightning, Hawker Hunter, Westland Wessex, and Sea King. The American museum includes fighters and bombers, A10 strike aircraft, and the Lockheed SR71 Blackbird reconnaissance plane, alongside a B-52 bomber. Pupil will learn to appreciate too that the airfield and buildings themselves are also exhibits.

On previous visits, we have been treated to flying displays by Spitfires and the Hispano-Suiza-manufactured Messerchmitt Bf 109 kept at Duxford, a Yakovlev display team, and a take-off by the resident Boeing B-17 “Flying Fortress”, the only airworthy example remaining in Europe. In 2023, there was a large number of Second World War aircraft flying in preparation for the Battle of Britain Day celebrations. We hope to see similar aircraft movements this year, along with aircraft maintenance and restoration projects in progress. We are grateful to the Imperial War Museum, who make available this type of opportunity to school groups free of charge.

Mr S Hudson, Teacher of Physics

YEAR 10: HUMANITIES DAY

This September, our School's very own reporting outlet – WHSBBC News – returns once again to the crucible of journalism that is the Humanities Enrichment Day.

American author Andrew Vacch's words immediately sprang to mind when planning the English Department's Enrichment Day this year: "journalism is what maintains democracy." In the current political climate, it is more important than ever for our pupils to be globally aware and effective communicators, and we intend on achieving just that.

Following on from the stimulating political and rhetorical works at the centre of our Key Stage 3 English education, pupils in Year 10 will now have the chance to put their own non-fiction skills to the test in order to persuade and inform their audience. Pupils will rotate between activities that centre around current affairs, philosophical debate, and masterclasses in how to craft the written word. At the end of the day, pupils will get the chance then to 'report' on their findings in the next instalment of the WHSBBC News.

The day will offer Year 10 pupils an opportunity to practice their GCSE Language skills, as well as encouraging them to read non-fiction and works of journalism fastidiously, perhaps even considering their own future in journalism so that they go on to maintain our democracy in their own words.

Miss C Bailey, Head of English

YEAR 11 AND UPPER SIXTH: TRIP TO NUCLEAR RACES

In September, students in Year 11 and the Upper Sixth are invited to take part in our exciting Enrichment Day at Nuclear Races, where students will challenge themselves through a series of demanding obstacles designed to test their determination, resilience, and teamwork.

Throughout the day, participants will face a variety of obstacles, including climbing walls, crawling tunnels, rope challenges, and water-filled ditches. With plenty of mud expected along the route, participants will need to be prepared to get completely covered from head to toe!

The event will provide an excellent opportunity for students to develop their teamwork skills. Many of the obstacles will require participants to work together, helping one another over barriers, offering encouragement during difficult sections, and collaborating to overcome challenges. As they make their way around the course, students will push themselves beyond their comfort zones while supporting their peers.

At the end of the day, students will leave with a great sense of achievement, having successfully completed one of the UK's most exciting obstacle race experiences. The Nuclear Races trip promises to be a fantastic day of adventure, teamwork, and fun, and we look forward to hearing all about their muddy exploits when they return.

Mrs L Hammond, Teacher of Mathematics

ENRICHMENT DAY FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

YEAR 11: PUZZLES AND PROBLEMS

Year 11 pupils who are not taking part in the Nuclear Races trip will remain in school for a special "Puzzles and Problems" Day. This is designed to develop pupils' mathematical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills through a variety of engaging activities and challenges. Pupils will have the opportunity to work collaboratively, sharing ideas and strategies as they tackle a range of stimulating mathematical tasks.

Throughout the day, pupils will work in teams to solve different mathematical problem-solving challenges, including difficult GCSE-style questions and problems taken from the prestigious UKMT Maths Challenge. These activities will encourage perseverance, logical thinking, and effective communication, helping pupils to build confidence in approaching unfamiliar and demanding mathematical problems while enjoying the challenge of working together with their peers.

Miss A James, Director of Mathematics

LOWER SIXTH: TRIP TO SIZEWELL

On Friday 18 September, Physics students in the Lower Sixth will have the opportunity to explore one of the UK's most significant pieces of energy infrastructure: Sizewell B, the country's only commercial Pressurised Water Reactor.

This remarkable facility operates with around 20 m^3 of water rushing through its reactor core every second, heated to roughly 300 °C. To keep the coolant in its liquid state at such extreme temperatures, the system is maintained at a pressure about 160 times greater than that of the atmosphere. Sizewell B contributes nearly 1.2 trillion watts of electricity to the National Grid (enough to supply around 2.3 million homes) and accounts for approximately 3% of the UK's total energy demand. Impressively, all nuclear waste produced since the station began operating remains stored on site, and by the end of its planned lifetime in 2035, the total volume of spent fuel is expected to be just 1,500 tonnes.

During the visit, students will be guided through several key areas of the power station. Highlights include the building that houses the spent fuel pool, the filtration systems that protect the station's water circuits from North Sea wildlife, and the vast turbine hall, where four enormous turbines spin at 3000 rpm.

As nuclear power forms an important part of the A Level Physics curriculum, this trip offers a valuable chance for students to connect their classroom learning with real-world engineering on an industrial scale.

Mr K Dalby, Head of Physics

SIXTH FORM: POTTERY PAINTING WORKSHOP

This autumn, we are delighted to once again offer our Sixth Form students the opportunity to visit Peacock Pottery Barn at Barleylands Craft Village in Billericay. In the 'Learn & Lunch' sessions, students will be introduced to the cobblestone glazing technique which they will apply to various designs and colours of their choosing. These will be fired at the kilns and students will be able to collect these from school in the following weeks.

Those students who attended last year were highly positive about the day, which will focus on mindfulness, stress-relieving, and creative outlets for expressing emotions amidst the hustle and bustle of their public examination year at WHSB. Students learn about mindfulness and mental wellness in the PSHEE curriculum, and this activity will provide a chance for participants to put those lessons into action.

Refreshments and a freshly prepared hot buffet lunch will be provided and are included in the cost of the trip; students with any dietary requirements are asked to make me aware of these in advance so the venue is aware. The coach will depart from WHSB after the start of the School day and arrive back in time for the end of the School day. This is likely to be a popular option with our Upper Sixth students so we ask that any students who are interested confirm their place as soon as possible.

Mr A Lo, Teacher of Mathematics

UPPER SIXTH MEDICINE, DENTISTRY, AND VETERINARY MEDICINE MOCK INTERVIEWS

Friday 18th September 2026 and Wednesday 25th November 2026

Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine (MDV) continue to be among the most popular university course choices for our Sixth Form students. Given the highly competitive nature of admissions to these courses, the School offers a comprehensive support programme for all aspiring MDV students, mainly delivered during weekly lunchtime sessions of the MDV Society.

Feedback from our recent Upper Sixth leavers strongly encourages students aspiring to study an MDV course to attend the MDV Society meetings. Many credit the School's MDV programme as being instrumental in supporting their applications.

A recent Upper Sixth Leaver said:

"MDV has been a very enjoyable experience for me as I have been able to interact and discuss medical topics I would not usually be able to do in day-day conversation. It has enabled me to learn more about the subject that I am so very passionate about and rekindle my motivation to study Medicine every week. I have been attending MDV since Year 9 and I now feel accustomed to the medical laws and ethics of the subject, improving my confidence and responding to sudden questions and thinking on the spot."

A key part of the MDV programme is the mock interview experience, designed to prepare students for the rigorous university interview process. This year, the mock interviews will

ENRICHMENT DAY FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

take place on Friday 18th September 2026, as part of Enrichment Day, and on Wednesday 25th November 2026.

These interviews are conducted by a range of professionals, including doctors, current MDV university students, and other healthcare practitioners. Students not only gain valuable practice in interview settings but also benefit from insightful conversations with the professionals about careers in healthcare. The interviews will be a mix of in-person and online, as well as panel and multiple mini-interview (MMI) style. MMI is the most common format, with students having to engage in 5-10 stations of mini-interviews, each station assessing a different skill.
A recent Upper Sixth Leaver reflected on this experience and said:

"The most helpful part of MDV was the mock interviews we did, where we spent the whole day doing interviews or preparing for them. I think that is what helped with my application the most, as it gave me realistic preparation for what an actual interview would be like, and the confidence I gained carried over very well into the interviews I attended."

Current Upper Sixth MDV applicants must check the MDV Society Teams page for further information about this year's mock interviews.

If any healthcare professionals would like to assist with the mock interviews and other future MDV events, please contact the School Office, addressing correspondence to Mrs Lo-Whitford. Thank you for your support.

Mrs E Lo-Whitford, Higher Education Adviser for Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary

MAIN ENTRANCE EXAMINATION FOR THE 11+

Saturday 19 September 2026

The School's main 11+ entrance examination day will take place on Saturday 19 September this year. We would like to extend our sincere thanks in advance to all members of staff involved in this important event for the School, as well as to our Prefect Team, whose support will be integral to the smooth running of the day, together with our Invigilators and Markers.

The alternative testing day will be held on Tuesday 29 September. Please note that the School will remain open as normal on this date. Year 9 pupils will either participate in the Take Your Child to Work Day initiative or engage in careers-related learning activities within School.

Miss G Fairfax, Deputy Headteacher

UPPER SIXTH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Monday 21 - Friday 25 September 2026

All subject departments will contribute to preparing students for the forthcoming A Level Examinations by systematically assessing their academic progress. Formative Assessments will be carried out during lesson time, providing a comprehensive and current overview of each student's attainment.
The results of these assessments will be incorporated into the Upper Sixth Phase 1 Report, which is scheduled for release on Friday 9 October.

Mrs K Revell, Director of Sixth Form

YEAR 11 EXTENDED ASSEMBLY: DEAD END

Wednesday 23 September 2026

On Wednesday 23 September 2026, Year 11 pupils will attend an extended assembly delivered by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership as part of the award-winning Dead End road safety and young driver education programme. This engaging and thought-provoking presentation is designed to help our pupils understand the importance of making safe and responsible decisions when using the roads, whether as pedestrians, passengers, cyclists or future drivers.

The Dead End programme uses educational theatre and interactive workshop elements to explore the risks associated with road use and the potentially life-changing consequences of poor decisions. Pupils will learn about the Fatal Four factors that contribute to serious road collisions: speeding, drink and drug driving, mobile phone use while driving, and failure to wear a seatbelt. The assembly will also highlight the disproportionate risks faced by young drivers and passengers, including the impact of driver inexperience and sleep deprivation. The session supports our Personal Development agenda and provides valuable preparation for pupils as they move towards greater independence and future driving responsibilities.

Middle School Pastoral Office

YEAR 9 HELPING PARENTS HELP THEIR SONS

Thursday 24 September 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Year 9 represents a crucial stage in a pupil's journey at Westcliff High School for Boys. As the final year of Lower School, it provides essential preparation for the demands of GCSE study, as well as forming the foundation for future academic success. This is also the year in which pupils will make their GCSE Option choices during the Spring Term. Performance and engagement throughout Year 9 can therefore play a significant role in determining which pathways remain open to them. Establishing strong study habits now is equally important, as these will underpin success as pupils move into Year 10 and beyond.

To support both pupils and parents at this key stage, we warmly invite families to attend the Year 9 Helping Parents Help Their Sons event. During the evening, the Year 9 Progress Leader and the Director of Lower School, supported by other staff, will provide guidance on the following:

- Establishing effective routines for success;
- Maintaining organisation and managing homework;
- Developing strong study habits and revision techniques;
- Reinforcing academic and behavioural expectations;
- Maximising progress across subjects;
- Supporting pupils when challenges arise;
- Understanding the range of support available, both in and out of School;
- Supporting the School's careers programme at home.

This event offers an excellent opportunity for parents to gain practical advice and a clearer understanding of how best to support their sons during this important year. Attendance is expected for all Year 9 pupils, and we strongly encourage parents to join us for what promises to be a highly valuable and informative session.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

GO FOR GRAMMAR! WITH THE WESTCLIFF CENTRE FOR GIFTED CHILDREN: GET UP AND GO!

Saturday 26 September 2026

Our WCGC *Go for Grammar!* programme continues to provide a series of themed Saturday workshops for local Year 5 pupils, running throughout the academic year.

Each session focuses on a different theme and includes engaging Mathematics and English tutorials, delivered by teaching staff from Westcliff High School for Boys. These sessions are carefully designed to support preparation for the 11+ examination, helping pupils to build confidence and develop key skills.

The workshops are also supported by Sixth Form students, who play an important role in assisting with the delivery of activities across the day. Any Sixth Form students interested in getting involved are encouraged to contact the Director of Lower School. The theme of the first session, Get Up and Go! offers an exciting programme of outdoor sporting activities, alongside dynamic sessions led by cadets from the Westcliff High School for Boys Combined Cadet Force (CCF), including Army, Navy, and RAF Sections. These activities are designed to be inclusive, enjoyable, and accessible for pupils of all abilities.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

YEAR 11 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Monday 28 September - Friday 2 October 2026

We would like to extend a warm welcome back to all our Middle School pupils as we begin what promises to be another productive and engaging term. Our Year 11 pupils are entering a crucial phase as they prepare for their upcoming GCSE examinations, while our Year 10 cohort embarks fully on their GCSE courses and continues to settle into the expectations of Middle School life.

During the week commencing Monday 28 September, Year 11 pupils will sit their formative assessments in most subjects. These low-stakes evaluations are designed to help consolidate knowledge from the Summer Term, build confidence, and provide an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate progress where needed. Pupils generally find this to be an important stepping stone in their academic development.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School

YEAR 9 TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

Tuesday 29 September 2026

Year 9 pupils are set to take part in a "Take Your Child to Work Day" on 29 September, offering a valuable opportunity to experience real working environments and develop essential employability skills.

The initiative focuses on building soft skills that are increasingly vital in today's job market. Pupils will gain first-hand insight into communication and teamwork, learning how professionals collaborate and interact effectively in different roles.

There will also be an emphasis on time management, as pupils observe how tasks are planned, prioritised, and completed within a working day. In addition, pupils will explore creative thinking, seeing how problem-solving and innovation play a key role across industries.

This programme aligns with the Government's new Modern Work Experience initiative, which highlights the importance of preparing young people for the changing world of work. These core skills — communication, teamwork, organisation, and creativity — have been identified as crucial for future success. By stepping into the workplace, Year 9 pupils will gain practical experience, broaden their career awareness, and begin building the skills needed for their future pathways.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser

YEAR 10 BRONZE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD: SEPTEMBER ASSESSMENT EXPEDITION

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award continues to flourish at WHSB. Our Silver Award participants successfully completed their expeditions during the Summer Term, while our Bronze Award cohort will undertake theirs shortly.

Current Year 10 pupils, who began their Bronze Award in Year 9, have already completed their training programme and are now preparing for their assessment expedition on 18 – 19 September, based around Hatfield Peverel and Danbury. During this expedition, pupils will navigate independently for approximately six hours each day, before arriving at camp where they are required to demonstrate independence and self-sufficiency.

Participants are encouraged to complete the remaining sections of the Bronze Award, namely Physical, Skills, and Volunteering by the Christmas break, particularly if they intend to progress to the Silver Award.

While the expedition element is often a highlight, the true value of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award lies in the breadth of the programme. Sustained commitment across all sections enables pupils to build resilience, develop new skills, and make meaningful contributions to their communities beyond the classroom.

Looking ahead, applications for the Bronze Award will open to current Year 9 pupils in the Spring Term. Pupils considering applying are encouraged to reflect carefully on the commitment required to complete all elements of the programme successfully, as well as their general behaviour and attendance.

Mr H Tresidder,
Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

At WHSB we offer a wide range of Clubs and Societies which often happen in our hour-long lunchbreak. They are overseen by a member of staff on a voluntary basis in their own time, and at least partly led by students themselves. The list of clubs changes regularly based on student interest and staff availability. The best way for students to find out about what is being offered is to carefully listen to the Daily Notices, which are read out by Form Tutors during morning registration. They can change at short notice. Activities are also displayed on noticeboards around School.

Pupils are encouraged to attend at least one extra-curricular activity each week.

Mr R Barber, Senior Head of House and House Coordinator

Origami Club

Origami Club is a place where people come to do Origami. We welcome in people wanting to learn and those who are already masters - everyone is welcome on these terms. Origami is the art of folding paper to create almost everything and in our Club you can make whatever you want. In the front, I help people learn Origami, and I also walk around and support pupils with their own creations. Some of the things we make are frogs, cranes, and boats but there are no boundaries.

Sitting around and folding is not all we do as I also set challenges for certain days or special events. Some of these include Boat contests, the Frog Races, and the main event taking place every year, 'Origami of The Year', a contest to see who is the most creative origami-er. The contest is balanced in a way that allows anyone to win. So far, I have run this club for over a year, and I still see new faces each time.

Bobbie Parker-East, Year 8

House Tamil Club

I founded Tamil Club two years ago and I feel it has been a very calming, relaxing, and enjoyable atmosphere for myself and the other students that attend. The process of teaching fellow pupils the Tamil language has enhanced my leadership and teaching skills, as well as improving their spoken and written Tamil.

The club takes place every Monday lunchtime and has helped students build commitment and develop organisation. I plan each session and have also created my own quizzes and tests to help develop their language skills.

Sai Sathish Kumar, Year 9

Over the past two years, attending the extra-curricular Tamil Club at WHSB has been an incredibly rewarding journey that has elevated my language skills to an intermediate level. I have gained immense benefit from the club, most notably through the guidance of my mentor, Sai Sathish Kumar, whose constant encouragement inspired me to master Tamil adjectives and unlock a much more descriptive way of expressing myself. Eager to give back to the community that helped me grow, I have contributed to learn more in our weekly sessions by revising the vocabulary taught by my mentor to boost my Tamil writing. This experience has not only strengthened my grasp of the language but has also allowed me to be a proactive, supportive part of a vibrant cultural space at School.

Rithul Jayakumar, Year 8

I first started attending Tamil Club in Year 7, and I have enjoyed my time at this club, learning new things. Sai has been very helpful to me as well, which is why I enjoyed learning Tamil in this club. I am in Year 9 now, and I still attend the club every Monday. This club gives me the opportunity to learn new words and phrases, which is what I enjoy. I have had a great time attending Tamil Club and it has really been a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to learn written Tamil.

Anirudhan Sathis, Year 8

Society/Club	Day	Time	Location	Years	Leader
Animation Society	Monday	Lunch	W11	Years 10	Mr Steel and Students
Art Club Key Stage 3	Tuesday	Lunch	E26	Years 7 - 9	Mr Hawkins
Art Club Key Stage 4 Support	Friday	Lunch	E28	Years 10 and 11	Mrs Glassock
Arkwright Scholarship	Thursday	Lunch	T1	Year 11	Mr Moore
Astronomy Society	Wednesday (+ various)	12:50pm - 1:35pm	SF12	All	Mr Dalby
Beyblade	Wednesday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber
Big Band	Tuesday	3:45pm - 5:00pm	Music Department M18	Grade 5 students	Mr Wood
Brass Ensemble	Thursday	1:00pm	M18	All	Mr Wood
Board Games	Friday	Lunch	E8 + various	All	Mr Barber
CAD Computer Aided Design	Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Lunch	T3	Year 8	Mr Wright
CCF Army	Thursday	3:45pm	South Drive	Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	CCF Staff
CCF Navy	Thursday	3:45pm	South Drive	Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	CCF Staff
CCF RAF	Thursday	3:45pm	South Drive	Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mr North
Chemistry Support	Friday A Thursday B	Lunch (+ Tuesday afterschool)	S1	Years 12 and 13	Mr Wightman
Chess Club	Friday	Lunch	S14	All	Mr Mansfield
Chess Club Year 7	Thursday	Lunch	S14	Year 7	Mr Mansfield
Creative Writing Club	Thursday	Lunch	E31	Key Stage 3	Miss Wood
Coding Club	Tuesday	Lunch	W11	Years 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mr Steel and Students
Computing Clubs	Various	Lunch	W10 /W11	Various	Dr Johsnon/Mr Steel
Concert Band/Show Orchestra	Tuesday	1:00pm	M18	Grade 4 students	Mr Wood
Countdown Club	Monday	Lunch	M1	All	Mr Lo and Mathematics Prefects
Debating	Various days	Lunch	Sixth Form Block SF14	Sixth Form	Mr Stevens
Earth Environmental Society	Thursday	Lunch	E3	All	Mr Marlow and Year 13 Students
Economics Society	Friday (+ some Thursdays)	1:00pm	SF15	Years 12 and 13	Mr North
Engineering Society	Thursday	Lunch	S17	Years 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13	Mr Hudson
English MOXBRIDGE 'Mock Oxbridge'	Tuesday	Lunch	E20	Sixth Form	Miss Bailey and Miss Wood
Ethical Food Society (EFOOD)	Tuesday Week A	Lunch	T4	Years 8 and 9 (7 Summer Term only)	Miss Onimisi
Football Cards Society	Wednesday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber
Gastronomy Society	Monday B Tuesday B	Lunch	T4	Years 8 and 9	Miss Onimisi
Geography Society	Monday	Lunch	E3	All	Miss Young
Horn Group	Wednesday	1:00pm	M12	All	Mrs Patterson
History Society	Thursday	1:00pm	W24	All	Dr Platts
Japanese Society	Monday	Lunch	M6	All	Mrs Lo-Whitford
Jazz Band	Monday	13:10	M18	All	Mr Wood and Mr Barrett
Jurassic Society	Monday	Lunch	W23	All	Mrs Cook and student leaders.
Latin for Beginners	Monday	Lunch	W21	Years 7 and 8	Ms McKeow, Dr Platts and Miss J James
Law Society	Tuesday	Lunch	SF14	Years 12 and 13	Student led and Mr Stevens
Library Clubs (various)	Various	Lunch	Library	All	Mrs Oats
Linux Club	Thursday	Lunch	W11	Years 11, 12 and 13	Mr Steel and Students Leaders
Machine Learning and Data Science	Wednesday	Lunch	W11	Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mr Steel and Students Leaders
Mahjong Club	Monday and Wednesday	Lunch (+ Friday at 3:35pm)	M3	Years 10 - 13	Mr Lo and Year 13 Student Leaders
Gauss Group (Mathematics Society)	Tuesday	Lunch	M2	All	Mr Lo and Miss James
Maths Help Club KS 3 and 4	Monday and Thursday	Lunch	M2	Years 7 - 11	Mathematics Department
Model Making	Monday A Wednesday B	Lunch	T2	Year 7	Mrs Seomore
Maths Help Club KS 5	Tuesday and Friday	Lunch	M3	Years 12 and 13	Mathematics Department
Morning Tech Club	Various mornings	Before School	T3	By appointment only	Mr Moore/Mr Wright

Society/Club	Day	Time	Location	Years	Leader
Medical, Dentistry and Vet Society (MDV)	Thursday	1:00pm - 1:40pm	W31	Years 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mrs Lo-Whitford
Music Technology Club	Friday	3:40pm - 5:00pm	Music Department	Key Stage 4	Mr Wood
Origami	Thursday	Lunch	S8	Years 7, 8 and 9	Miss Negus
Oxbridge	Monday	Lunch	Westcliff Theatre	Years 12 and 13	Mr Stevens
Pegasus	Monday	Lunch	E20	Years 10 and 11	Miss Arunkumar and Miss Bailey
Personal Finance and Investment Society	Tuesdays	Lunch	E4 (+E8)	All	Siddharth Jayaprakash, Kevin Sijo and Mr Barber
Philosophy Society	Tuesday	Lunch	W23	Years 12 and 13	Mr Hiller
Pokémon	Thursday and Friday	Lunch	E8 or E4	All	Mr Barber
Psychology Society	Tuesdays Week B	Lunch	SF13	Years 10, 11, 12, 13	Mrs Jenkins
Public Speaking and Debate Club	Friday	Lunch	M5	Year s7, 8 , 9 and 10	Mr Risk
Reading and Private Study Club	Monday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber
RS Discussion Club CU	Friday	Lunch	W23	Key Stage 3	Mr Hiller
Robotics Club	Friday Week B	Lunch	T1	Year 10	Mr Moore
Rubik's Cube	Wednesday	Lunch	E8/E4	All	Mr Barber
Scratch Club	Friday	Lunch	W11	All	Mr Steel and Student Leaders
Sport	Daily	Lunch	Field, Sports Hall, Gym	Various	PE Staff
Star Wars Club	Wednesday	Lunch	E26	All	Mr Hawkins
String Ensemble	Wednesday	1:00pm	M18	All	Mr Wood
Tamil Club	Wednesday	Lunch	E29	All Years	Miss Arunkumar
Technology Club Key Stage 3	By Appointment	Various Lunchtimes	Technology Block	Key Stage 3	Mr Moore and Technology Staff
Treble Choir	Thursday	1:00pm	M12	Years 7 and 8	Mr Humphrey
Uno Club	Monday and Thursday	1:00pm	E8 or E16	All	Student led and Mr Barber
Wargaming Club	Friday	3:35pm	M1-M6	All	Mrs Lo-Whitford
Westcliff Choir	Friday	1:00pm	M18	All	Mr Wood
Westcliff Economist	Various Lunchtimes	Lunch	Economics Department	By invitation only	Economics Department
Westcliff Sinfonia (finish November)	Wednesday	3:45pm - 5:00pm	M18	Grade 5 students	Mr Wood and Mr Wood
Westcliff Pride	Tuesday	1:00pm	M1	Sixth Form and Key Stage 4	Miss Arunkumar, Miss Jackson and Mr Huntington
Yu-Gi-Oh	Friday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber

Please carefully listen to daily register notices during form time, e-mails and Microsoft Teams for further details. These activities may be cancelled or amended at short notice and are run by staff and students in their own time on a voluntary basis. Most are unfunded but are free of charge.

Sport information is displayed in a separate document which has been circulated. House events are promoted on the House noticeboards.

SUMMER BIG BAND

WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL

FOR BOYS

WESTCLIFF HIG
FOR BO

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT WHSB

Meet the Department

The MFL Department is composed of boath native speakers and those of us who have learned a modern foreign language at school, the latter of which are like the vast majority of our pupils. We are all passionate about teaching the languages on offer at Westcliff High School for Boys, but we are also acutely aware of the importance of understanding other cultures, and language learning certainly provides the perfect opportunity to become more tolerant and respectful. We are fortunate to teach in a school where Languages are valued and given importance on the curriculum, with excellent numbers of dual linguists at GCSE, something that is sadly becoming a rarity in schools nationwide.

Teachers in the MFL Department (from left to right):
Ms J McKeown (Head of Department), Mrs J Williams, Mr G Rayment, Miss A Bernárdez Touceda, Mr L Chanut, Mr G Madrid, Ms J James, Mrs J Bennett, Miss G Fairfax, Ms M Niedziela

Interviews conducted by Harry Hasler, Year 11

Ms J McKeown, Head of Modern Foreign Languages

Life as a student
Ms McKeown's language journey began when her parents brought her an Italian-language Charlie Brown book back from a ski trip when she was 10 or 11 years old. She found it intriguing and even though she did not understand it, it sparked a curiosity in her. Ms McKeown took French, Spanish, and Latin at O Level, and the same again at A level, although she had wanted to study Mathematics instead of Latin!

Experience abroad
Before going to university, Ms McKeown volunteered in Clermont Ferrand, where she stayed for eight months and decided to ask her college if she could switch to a new language, Mandarin. She then studied one year of Mandarin at the University of Cambridge, but it proved challenging and she reverted back to French and Spanish.

Favourite words: Canicule and libélula
Favourite books: Aya de Yopougon and Cien Años de Soledad

Looking to the future
Ms McKeown is currently learning Italian and hopes to become fluent in time. She also plans to return to Mandarin when she retires. Her advice is to read as much as possible, watch shows in the original language or with subtitles in the foreign language, and listen to music and podcasts.

Mrs J Williams, Teacher of French and Senior Teacher

Life as a student
Mrs Williams' interest in languages began through family holidays in France and string orchestra exchanges in Germany. Mrs Williams was also lucky enough to see Berlin both pre- and post-unification on one of these special trips. At school she studied French, German, Russian, and Latin before reading Modern and Medieval Languages at the University of Cambridge. Mrs Williams is not only well versed in German, French and Russian but also languages from faraway lands such as Geordie.

Experience abroad
She lived in France during the third year of her degree, where she worked as an English assistant in schools in Sens. Mrs Williams has also travelled widely in Germany and Canada.

Favourite words: la joie and die Freude
Favourite books: Le Petit Prince and Madame Bovary. She also enjoys the Jean de Florette series.

Looking to the future
Mrs Williams is currently relearning Russian and would also like to learn Japanese or Breton. Her advice is to speak as much as possible, listen to music, watch films, and read familiar books like Harry Potter in translation.

Mr G Rayment, Head of French

Life as a student
Mr Rayment was inspired to learn languages through school and continued studying French and German through A Level and at the University of Nottingham.

Experience abroad
He has spent time in both Germany and France, including working as an English assistant in Hamburg, and as an activity leader in Le Barcarès.

Favourite words: ronronnement and Fernweh
Favourite book: Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum

Looking to the future
He would like to learn Spanish. His advice is to be confident and not be afraid of making mistakes while learning.

Ms M Niedziela, Head of German

Life as a student
Ms Niedziela's language learning began very early through family travel and speaking English with an au pair. She studied English and French before studying English and Comparative Literature at Freie Universität Berlin, and later completed a Master's degree at the University of East Anglia.

Experience abroad
Ms Niedziela spent a year living in Phoenix, Arizona, and also took part in exchanges in England.

Favourite word: Schnapsidee
Favourite book: Die Entdeckung der Langsamkeit

Looking to the future
Ms Niedziela would like to learn Maltese. Her advice is to immerse yourself in the language by listening, reading, and practising vocabulary regularly.

Mr G Madrid, Teacher of Spanish

Life as a student
Mr Madrid always enjoyed languages from an early age and particularly liked learning English and Spanish at school. This interest led him to continue studying languages at university, where he studied English with Spanish at the University of Alicante.

Experience abroad
He lived in Spain until the age of 23, giving him extensive experience of Spanish language and culture.

Favourite word: juramento
Favourite book: Don Quijote de La Mancha

Looking to the future
He would like to learn French and Italian. His advice to students is to never stop learning languages, as they help you understand other cultures more deeply and create opportunities to live or work abroad.

Miss G Fairfax, Teacher of French and Deputy Head

Life as a student
Miss Fairfax studied Welsh, French, and German at school before continuing French and German at A Level. She later studied English Law and French Law at King's College, London, and the Sorbonne.

Experience abroad
Miss Fairfax spent time studying in France and Germany.

Favourite words: désormais and néanmoins
Favourite book: L'Étranger

Looking to the future
Miss Fairfax says she would love to learn every language if possible. Her advice is to take every opportunity to speak the language and never give up.

Ms J James, Teacher of German and French

Life as a student
Ms James began learning French at the age of 7 in primary school. School trips to Normandy helped inspire her interest in languages, as pupils were encouraged to speak with local children and experience French culture directly. She later studied French, German, and Italian and continued French and German at a higher level through the French Institute in London and the Open University.

Experience abroad
Ms James has worked in both Paris and Munich as a translator.

Favourite words: libellule and Kuddelmuddel
Favourite books: L'Étranger and Der Zauberberg

Ms James also speaks Italian and would like to learn Danish.

Looking to the future
Her advice to students is to be kind to yourself, embrace mistakes, and celebrate progress while learning languages.

Miss A Bernárdez Touceda, Teacher of Spanish

Life as a student
Miss Bernárdez grew up bilingual in Spanish and Galician, which sparked her interest in languages and culture from an early age. She studied French and English in Spain before completing a Foreign Languages degree at Universidade de Vigo.

Experience abroad
Miss Bernárdez lived in Spain until the age of 22 and spent summers in both France and Switzerland. She also lived in Norway for a year.

Favourite words: caricia, alba, petricor, and dépaysement
Favourite book: La Fundación

Looking to the future
Miss Bernárdez would like to continue learning German. Her advice is to immerse yourself in languages through films, music, books, and newspapers.

Mr L Chanut, Teacher of French

Life as a student
Mr Chanut's interest in languages developed further after spending two months on a German exchange in Year 11. He studied English and German through the French Baccalauréat before attending Université Jean Monnet, where he studied English Linguistics, Literature, History, and German modules.

Experience abroad
He grew up in France and spent time in Germany during his exchange programme.

Favourite word in English: Heathrow (so difficult for French speakers to pronounce!)
Favourite books: the Harry Potter series in different languages

Looking to the future
He would like to learn Arabic. His advice is to immerse yourself in the language through podcasts, books, audiobooks, and listening practice.

Mrs J Bennett, Teacher of German

Life as a student
Mrs Bennett chose her languages very carefully when choosing GCSEs, A levels and her degree, choosing French and German at each possible stage. She has also had much experience abroad, spending one year in Vienna with a family – stating that the immersion allowed for her language learning journey to fully develop. Moreover, Mrs Bennett worked as an assistante at a Lycée in France, saying again how helpful the immersion was.

Favourite words: vachement and Fußgängerzone
Favourite books: Madame Bovary and Der Richter und sein Henker

Mrs Bennett would love to learn Italian in the future to add to her already interesting language arsenal. Her advice is that language learning is an invaluable skill as we are not learning just a language but also a culture, a nation and a lifestyle. Mrs Bennett believes that learning just a few words can lead to many things abroad.

MFL Extra-Curricular Activities and Competitions

Latin
On Monday lunchtimes in W21, new pupils in all Year Groups are welcome to join our existing Latin scholars as we work through the excellent Cambridge Latin Course. Dr Platts takes charge of the beginners in Book I, whilst Ms McKeown works through Book II with the more advanced pupils. Latin is an excellent base for learning any of the Romance Languages – French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Catalan, Galician and other related languages of the Mediterranean – and also enhances pupils' advanced vocabulary in English.

Spelling Bee
In the autumn term, all Year 7 pupils take part in the Spelling Bee in both languages studied. This is a House competition organised by Mr Rayment (Head of Osprey House) and Mr Madrid (Head of Kestrel House), with winning pupils awarded House Points and prizes. It is great fun and excellent practice for learning spellings and how to say the alphabet in French, German and Spanish.

Translation Bee
At the end of the autumn term and the start of the spring term, all Year 8 pupils take part in the Translation Bee in the languages they study. Just like the Spelling Bee, this is a House competition organised by Mr Rayment and Mr Madrid, and all pupils compete in class, with the top three, four or five pupils proceeding to the finals in the Westcliff Theatre.

GCHQ
Each autumn term, Year 9 talented linguists and mathematicians are invited to compete in teams in a five-day national challenge to crack increasingly complex coding and linguistic challenges. Last year 2,734 teams competed nationally, with our top two teams Adventurous Rattlesnake and Heroic Cheetah coming 30th and 31st nationally; as well as 4th and 5th in the region, out of 260 – an outstanding achievement. Here are some of the comments from last year's competitors:

"My team and I had a lot of fun solving puzzles together and, while some did it to try and win the prize, I genuinely thought that it was great."

Foreign Language Assistants

Every year, we welcome three Foreign Language Assistants to Westcliff High School for Boys. We are extremely fortunate to be able to continue to offer this provision, because employing Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs) offers significant benefits to both pupils and schools. For pupils, FLAs provide authentic exposure to native speakers, improving pronunciation, listening skills, and confidence in speaking. They also bring cultural insights, enriching lessons with real-life perspectives on language use and traditions. This helps to increase student engagement and motivation, making language learning more meaningful and enjoyable. Last year, our Assistants came to us from Nantes in France, Kiel in Germany, and Bogotá in Colombia. Feedback from the pupils has been particularly positive, and all of us, without exception, have enjoyed their input and expertise.

Celebrating success in the 'Have Your Say' Languages Competition for schools held in East Anglia

"I think the GCHQ was an amazing experience that both challenged my mind while I still had a lot of fun. I had the opportunity to grow closer with my teammates and even went away to do these questions at home."

"I found the competition very engaging as I had never done anything of the sort before, and the range of challenges was amazing. We had to approach it with strategy and spend lots of time analysing each challenge using language skills such as grammar rules, prefixes and endings and word orders."

UK Linguistics Olympiad
The UK Linguistics Olympiad offers pupils a unique opportunity to explore the science of language through challenging and engaging problem-solving tasks. Sixth Form students competed in this prestigious competition for the first time in Autumn 2025. Two of our Upper Sixth Linguists, both of whom received offers to study Languages at the University of Cambridge, achieved silver (Seb Puddick) and bronze (Joe Galvin). Those currently in Years 11 and the Lower Sixth will be eligible to compete next year; watch out for announcements, and remember, this is not just for A Level linguists!

The Anthea Bell Prize

This national competition is run by Queen's College, Oxford, in the spring term each year, and was first established in 2021. It is named in honour of Anthea Bell, acclaimed translator of the Asterix comics and other literary works from French, German and Danish. Six languages are included in the competition: French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Mandarin. Competitors are given a text in the foreign language and must translate it into English. The texts can be poems, excerpts from novels or children's books, or non-fiction. Westcliff High School for Boys' pupils have enjoyed considerable success from the outset of this prestigious competition, with winners from the East of England, and nationally.

Have Your Say

This is a fun speaking competition where pupils compete in pairs against pupils from other schools in the East of England. We start to advertise this competition in January each year, with the finals taking place in May. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 must memorise and perform a dialogue, completing the last four lines themselves. There is a further element added in the finals; pupils must read aloud a new dialogue, which they can prepare for three minutes beforehand. In Year 10, pupils must write their own dialogue with a set scenario and using ten key words from a list of fourteen. The further element in the finals requires them to complete a separate dialogue under time constraints and to then read aloud the new dialogue before the judges.

We have had considerable success since competing in the past two years, with the following results:

First place in 2026

- Year 7 French: Theo Moolman and Ayan Cheema
- Year 9 Spanish: Solonas Kalousis-Tzanetopoulos and James Everett
- Year 9 German: Zach Waters and Hunter Merry
- Year 10 Spanish: Edward Ciobanu and Ayaan Ahmed
- Year 10 German: Ishan Sheikh and Harry Hasler

First place in 2025

- Year 8 French: Sucheet Yedal and Taseen Ahmed
- Year 9 German: Ishan Sheikh and Harry Hasler

Flash Fiction

The Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages at the University of Oxford runs Flash Fiction Competitions in French, Spanish and German each year. Secondary school pupils are invited to submit a complete story of no more than 100 words, in French, Spanish, or German, for the chance to win up to £100. This is a competition that we encourage pupils to enter, with deadlines usually in March of each year. Last year, we were delighted to learn that Muhammad Anwaar Ul Haq, then in Year 7, Kayden Miraflor, then in Year 8, and Habibur Kazi, then in Year 9, were highly commended for their German short stories.

The Stephen Spender Prize

From May to July each year, entries are invited to the Stephen Spender Prize, an annual competition for poetry in translation that celebrates the creativity of young people across the UK and Ireland, as well as their teachers. The prize has categories for schools, teachers and individual young people, and the School has enjoyed success in this competition in recent years. Each year there is a special 'spotlight' strand that focuses on a different widely spoken language. The spotlight language for 2026 is Polish.

Mother Tongue, Other Tongue

The Mother Tongue, Other Tongue competition is a multilingual poetry contest that celebrates cultural diversity and the range of languages spoken in secondary schools in England. Organised annually by Routes into Languages East in partnership with the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages, it invites students to either write an original poem in a language they are learning at school or share a story or poem from their mother tongue if it is not English. The competition encourages creativity, linguistic skills, and pride in cultural heritage, bringing together students from diverse backgrounds to celebrate the richness of languages. We have a good track record of success in this competition, with 29 shortlisted students last year, and 8 winners. Students should watch out for announcements regarding future competitions.

Football and Olympics Challenges

During great international sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, the Football World Cup, and the Africa Cup of Nations, the MFL Department puts on a week of lunchtime quizzes and summer holiday challenges to celebrate the languages spoken by the host nation or competing nations. Pupils should watch this space for AFCON 2027, and the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028!

MFL Trips

BFI trips

In the autumn and spring terms, Sixth Form linguists travel to the South Bank in London to attend a study day at the British Film Institute (the BFI). As part of the A Level course, students must study a film in the foreign language studied, and in the A Level examination, they write an essay where they analyse a particular aspect of the film. This could be about characters, themes or techniques. The study day at the BFI is conducted by a university lecturer in the language studied, with the opportunity for students to take part, answering questions as part of the audience, and focusing on different aspects of the film. In the afternoon, students watch the film on the big screen, giving them the opportunity to see the film as the director had intended it, i.e. in the cinema.

At Westcliff High School for Boys, we study Au revoir les enfants by Louis Malle in French, El laberinto del fauno by Guillermo del Toro in Spanish, and Good Bye, Lenin! by Wolfgang Becker in German. It is a very useful and enjoyable study day for our A Level linguists.

Almería

We are fortunate to have an excellent partner school in Almería, IES Albaída, and have collaborated on a number of penpal projects over the years. We have also visited Almería and Andalusia three times, taking nearly a hundred and twenty pupils in total over the three visits. We are delighted be returning in February 2027 with a further thirty-five pupils. We spend a day with our friends at IES Albaída in their school, visit the theme park in the Tabernas Desert, explore the old city of Almería, with its Alcazaba, then visit the world heritage monuments of La Alhambra in Granada, the Mezquita-Catedral of Córdoba, and finish the trip with a visit to Seville and its cathedral and Plaza de España. More information will be shared in the next edition of *The Westcliff Diary*, prior to our February 2027 visit.

Paris

As outlined in our diary entry in this edition, the Modern Languages Department is looking forward to the forthcoming trip to Paris in October, an exciting opportunity for pupils from Years 9 to the Upper Sixth to deepen their understanding of French history and culture.

A central focus of the trip is the study of France during the Second World War and the cultural heritage of France. Educational visits to La Coupole, Les Invalides, the Château de Versailles and the Armistice Museum will bring French History vividly to life. Experiencing these sites first-hand allows pupils to move beyond textbooks, developing a deeper appreciation of the social, political and human impact of the war.

Combined with opportunities to practise language skills and explore cultural landmarks such as the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower, this promises to be a highly enriching and memorable educational experience.

Year 10 Language Leaders

Dual linguists in Year 10 are invited to become Language Leaders, and our able linguists take on roles as mentors and organise events for the Modern Foreign Languages Department. We are very grateful to this team of devoted and inspirational pupils for supporting younger pupils in their learning, and for organising and facilitating lunchtime events.

Mentoring and Support Sessions

Every lunchtime apart from Fridays, pupils in Years 7 to 10 are welcome to attend mentoring sessions to support them with their Modern Foreign Language queries and doubts. W9 is dedicated to Spanish mentoring, W27 is the German mentoring room, and W7 is the French mentoring room. Pupils often find it helpful to attend before a vocabulary test or to help them revise for an end of module assessment. Some pupils will be instructed to attend if they are falling behind in their learning. The mentoring is designed as support and the vast majority of those who attend find that it is very helpful.

Ms J McKeown, Head of Modern Foreign Languages

What do our students say?

Sebastian Shirley, Year 11

Studying modern foreign languages at Westcliff has been an extremely enriching experience which has allowed me to connect with some truly fantastic people around the world. From speaking to the students at our sister school I.E.S Albaída on the MFL trip to Andalusia last February, to being able to speak to international opponents and locals when travelling for ju-jitsu competitions, my studying of Spanish and German has been a great tool to open my mind to different cultures and understand the differences between them.

Having been born in Italy and growing up in a bilingual household, I have always appreciated the importance of knowing multiple languages and I think that it is very important for others to understand this too. If anybody is unsure as to whether they would like to study languages in further education, or indeed for GCSEs for younger students, I would implore you to do so; knowledge of languages can greatly broaden your horizons and is an extremely attractive attribute for any future employers.

Ishan Sheikh, Year 11

Even as a small child, I longed to learn as many languages as possible. They sparked a real passion in me. The idea of being able to communicate with complete strangers was truly exciting. What I particularly love about foreign languages are the unique phrases and expressions that allow me to express myself in completely different ways, ways I would hardly have thought possible. I grew up bilingual, and I encounter such expressions again and again. Every language is characterized by its own unique beauty, and that is what makes them so wonderful.

I am firmly convinced that foreign languages have enriched my life. They have shown me how entirely new worlds, cultures, and ways of thinking are open to me. Language serves, in a sense, as a gateway to humanity and communication. The more I have immersed myself in languages, the more I have appreciated how integral they are to life. Culture, art, and history all contribute to shaping language. For example, in German, there are many nautical idioms that are deeply rooted in everyday speech, such as 'die Wogen glätten'.

Godsreal Anokye, Year 11

I study French and Spanish, and learning languages has helped me improve my confidence, communication skills, and understanding of other cultures. I have found that practising speaking and listening has made me more comfortable when talking to new people, and it has also improved my memory and problem-solving skills. When I travelled to Spain, being able to use some of the language helped me with things like ordering food, asking for directions, and speaking to local people, which made the experience more enjoyable and less stressful. One piece of advice I would give to younger students is to practise little and often, not be afraid of making mistakes, and use things like music, films, or apps to help learning feel more interesting. Overall, learning languages has been a valuable experience because it opens opportunities for travel, future careers, and meeting people from different backgrounds.

Harry Hasler, Year 11

I study German at GCSE here at WHSB. It is an honour to be taught by such talented teachers who are so passionate and dedicated to their language. I personally have taken part in every language competition offered, from Mother Tongue, Other Tongue, to Have Your Say; the latter I have won on each occasion I have entered. Learning languages helps in every single field of study, from History and Religious Studies to helping logical thinking in Mathematics and the Sciences. I do have one regret, however, which is not taking double languages at GCSE - studying German has helped me so much and I can only imagine how much French would also have helped.

I would hugely recommend studying double languages at GCSE, to avoid the regret I have, but to also take part in every possible opportunity, from mentoring to competitions and trips; it all helps - trust me!

Karmanya Panchal, Upper Sixth

A Levels: Biology, Chemistry, French and Mathematics
GCSE: French and Spanish
Future studies or career plans: Medicine
Favourite word in French: 'espérance'
Favourite French film: Les Choristes
Other languages spoken or understood: Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati; some Portuguese and Latin
Another language I would like to learn: Italian

My language learning journey began in secondary school through GCSE Spanish and French, as well as studying Latin for several years. I was inspired by how languages are about far more than just words; they offer insight into different cultures, histories, and ways of life. I have taken part in Anthea Bell, Stephen Spender, and Mother Tongue, Other Tongue over the years, with some success. Unfortunately, I have not yet been to France.

Tip for younger pupils
A language is so much more than the textbook you have or the words you cram for the vocabulary test. Take some time to fully immerse yourself in the language and its culture, learning what it truly means to know a language.

Lily Jones, Upper Sixth

A Levels: Spanish, Geography, Physical Education and Mathematics
GCSE: French and Spanish
Future studies or career plans: Physical Education, or Primary School Teacher
Favourite word in Spanish: 'lavavajillas' because it is fun to say
Favourite Spanish singer: Bad Bunny; I think his songs are very catchy
Another language I would like to learn: Mandarin, because then I could communicate with most people in the world, either in English, Mandarin, or Spanish

I have been learning languages since primary school which helped to start my enjoyment of them. I took part in the Mother Tongue, Other Tongue competition when I was at Westcliff High School for Girls. I have visited Spain and Gran Canaria.

Tip for younger pupils:
Even if you do not understand them much at first, keep trying, because once you grasp it, then it will feel so easy.

Ryan Balls, Upper Sixth

A Levels: German, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Economics

GCSE: German
Future studies or career plans: Economics, either at a university or through a degree apprenticeship
Favourite word or saying in German: My favourite saying is 'Das ist mir doch Wurst', but if just a word it would be 'Papagei'
Favourite German TV show: Dark, a Netflix original series dealing with time travel
Another language I would like to learn: I would like to learn the basics of sign language

My language learning began in primary school, learning the very basics in both Spanish and French. My true inspiration for languages came when studying German, being fascinated with their weird sayings and unique culture. I have taken part in the Anthea Bell competition this year, the German Flash Fiction competition, and a German translation competition. I plan to go to Germany over the summer.

Tip for younger pupils
Just do a little bit of the language each day. Whether a consistent Duolingo streak or daily vocabulary revision.

Niamh Williams, Upper Sixth

A Levels: French, Mathematics, Economics and Physical Education

GCSE: French
Future studies or career plans: I am considering either studying French and Italian at university or doing a solicitor degree apprenticeship.
Favourite word in French: 'pamplemousse'
Favourite French series: Lupin on Netflix
Other languages spoken or understood: I learned a little BSL at primary school
Another language I would like to learn: Italian

I started learning French in Year 7, though I had learnt a little before that. I was inspired by my family who live in France. I came runner up in the Mother Tongue Other Tongue competition in 2023, and won it in 2024 whilst at Westcliff High School for Girls. I have also taken part in other competitions such as Anthea Bell, as well as the UK Linguistics Olympiad. I have visited France many times and I am about to go to the French-speaking part of Canada.

Tip for younger pupils
Learn useful phrases, not random words.

Muktadir Ahamed, Upper Sixth

A Levels: French, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry
GCSE: French and German
Future studies or career plans: Medicine
Favourite word in French: 'kiffer' meaning 'to like' (this actually comes from a Moroccan/ Algerian Arabic word meaning 'opiate')
Favourite French series: Family Business, a TV show about a Jewish family in Paris. It is very funny and available on Netflix
Other languages spoken or understood: Bengali / Bangla
Another language I would like to learn: Arabic, and to improve my command of my mother tongue

My language learning journey began in primary school when I joined a French club. I am inspired to learn languages, because they allow me to explore films, TV shows and media from different countries. I have had success in the Mother Tongue, Other Tongue competition. I visited France in the summer of 2025.

Tip for younger pupils
Instead of memorising vocab lists, try to listen to content/media in that language. It will be really challenging at first but give it some time. I would recommend starting with English subtitles at first and, when you get familiar, use subtitles in the target language.

Leo Gardner, Upper Sixth

A Levels: Spanish, Mathematics, Economics, History
GCSE: French and Spanish
Future studies or career plans: A degree apprenticeship in banking, UBS or Deutsche Bank.
Favourite word in Spanish: 'cucaracha'
Favourite Spanish singer: Bad Bunny; his music is very upbeat, which makes a change from a lot of English and American music
Other languages spoken or understood: very simple Japanese
Another language I would like to learn: more Japanese

I learned French and Mandarin at primary school, then started learning Spanish using apps during lockdown to prepare for secondary school. I have competed in Anthea Bell and Stephen Spender competitions. My Dutch Stephen Spender entry in Year 9 was commended. I have also made two AFCON quizzes for the MFL Department and planned something for the world cup in the summer. I have visited all of the Canary Islands (returning to Lanzarote during the summer) and I have also visited Spain on multiple occasions (mainly the south, with one of those times being with the School).

Tip for younger pupils
Immerse yourself in the language as much as possible, as it is not just words on paper.

Oliver Doel, Upper Sixth

A Levels: Spanish, German, Economics, History
GCSE: German and Spanish
Future studies or career plans: Languages at university (either Spanish and German, or one of those two and a new language)
Favourite German band: Rammstein, because I like metal and rock
Another language I would like to learn: Italian
I did French at primary school but did not continue it further. I started Spanish and German in Year 7. I have enjoyed languages

since joining WHSB and I happened to be good at them as well, so that inspired me to continue learning them. Competition successes: Anthea Bell (regional winner for Italian, and runner up nationally), Stephen Spender Translation Prize (commendation), Oxford University Flash Fiction Competition (results yet to be announced). I have visited Spain (once with the School on the February 2024 trip to Almería, Granada and Córdoba; Barcelona), and Austria (Vienna).

Tip for younger pupils:
Find an aspect of the culture of the country that you actually enjoy and look deeper into that, for example sport or food or music. Languages is not just conjugations and grammar and all of that boring stuff, it is also about the culture which can be very interesting.

Oliver Doel, Upper Sixth

Alumni

Many of our A Level linguists go on to have interesting and diverse careers in areas which include finance, law, education, international business, journalism, and aviation. Here, we are delighted to share some spotlights on recent leavers.

Piers Douglas

A Level MFL: French (plus Mathematics and Physics)
Years at WHSB: 2010 – 2017
Training post A Levels: Flight training school, Jerez, Spain
Career now: Senior First Officer, RyanAir
Lived abroad: I trained to fly in Spain, and learned enough Spanish to get by
Use of languages in day-to-day work: Occasionally I speak French to passengers or ground staff when we fly to France (I go to Beziers), or when on holiday there (mostly skiing these days).

Ryan Jakhu, former Vice School Captain

A Level MFL: French (plus Economics, Mathematics, and Further Mathematics)
Years at WHSB: 2015 – 2022
University and Degree: LSE, BSc Management
Career now: Analyst in the Asset Management industry at Legal and General
How I am using Languages: It is great to be able to converse in French with my international colleagues and connect on that level; it offers a unique dynamic in a relationship
New languages learned: I am trying to pick up my native language of Punjabi (small steps so far!)

Jack Browning

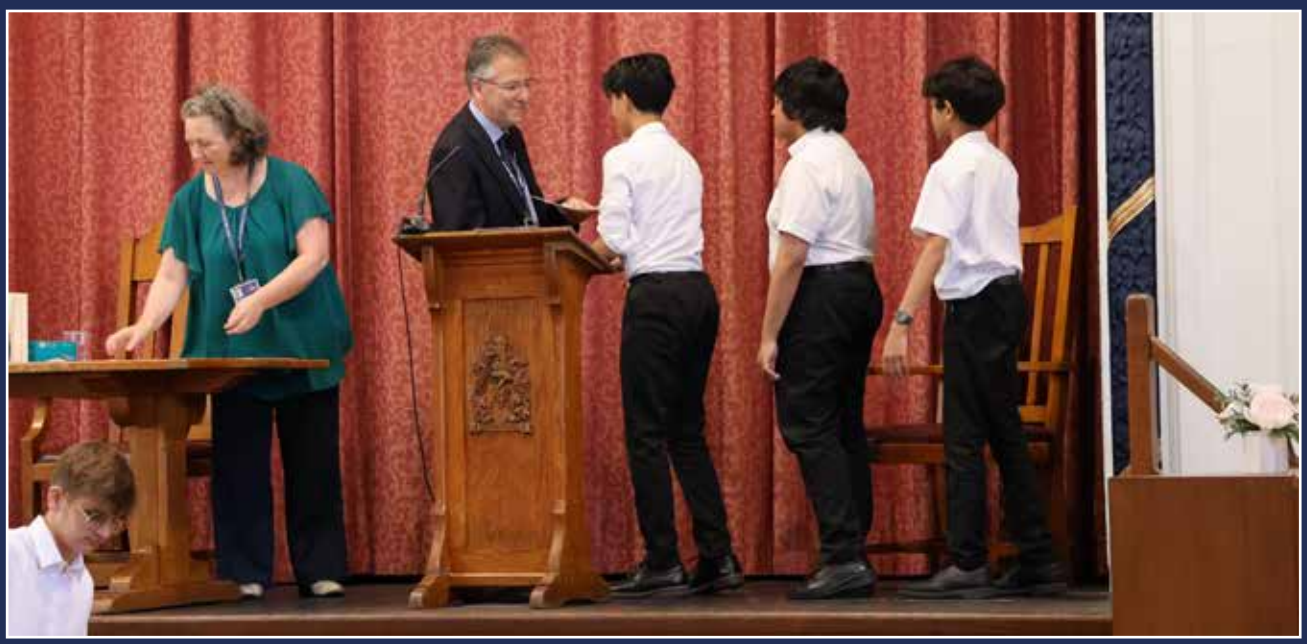
A Level MFL: French (plus English Literature, History, and Art)

Years At WHSB: 2009 - 2016
University and Degree: University of the Arts, London (Fine Art)
Career Now: Professional Musician and Artist
Lived Abroad: My fiancée is Dutch; I lived near Eindhoven between 2022 and 2024
How Languages help me with my work: I travel and exhibit all over the world; for example in July 2025 I worked in Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, France, and the United States. Having a love of learning languages has helped immensely with my career.

I am very fortunate that both my art and my music take me around the world, and so language plays a huge part in my work. My job is a very social one, and within the span of a month I might be performing or exhibiting in Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, France and the United States (this was my July 2025!) and so having a love of learning language and a slight proclivity to picking them up has helped immensely with forging friendships, maintaining and expanding upon professional relationships, and interacting with listeners, collectors and more.

Beyond the practical benefit of speaking French, and now Dutch as well, it has expanded my creative horizons so much. There is the ability to converse, or at least make an effort with folks abroad, but moreover, I have the confidence to perform foreign music when we tour away from home; in 2025, it led to a 'viral moment' on social media when we surprised our Dutch audiences with a Dutch song during our encore, and had hundreds of people singing it back to us once the shock had worn off!

I love playing with language within my songwriting, and I attribute much of that to the experimentation and exploration of the French language that was encouraged during my time at WHSB.



MFL Award Winners, July 2026

CCF PASS OFF PARADE

YEAR 10 EDUCATION EVENING

Thursday 1 October 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

On Thursday 1 October, Year 10 pupils and their parents are required to attend an Education Evening outlining the School's expectations for the next two years. This session will explain how the School will support students, what will be expected of them, and how parents can best contribute to their child's success. Attendees will hear from senior staff and students about the GCSE journey, including practical advice on revision techniques, engagement, and time management. Additionally, the new pastoral team will be introduced, and the session will highlight the strong link between excellent attendance, active participation beyond the classroom, and academic achievement.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School

JOINING THE COMBINED CADET FORCE INTEREST EVENING

Thursday 1 October 2026, 7.30pm – 8.30pm

Through our tri-service (Army, Royal Navy, and Royal Air Force) Combined Cadet Force, we provide a range of opportunities and experiences from military themed activities to adventurous training. These include Sailing, Expeditions, Fieldcraft, Flying, Shooting, Camps, and Competitions, all of which provide our cadets with enhanced skills such as Leadership, Discipline, Teamwork, Communication, and Problem Solving. There are opportunities to gain qualifications, develop resilience, improve self-efficacy, and even travel abroad through courses and international exchanges.

The CCF continues this term with an exciting programme of activities for all three sections, Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force, encompassing military skills, personal development, and community engagement. These take place on our weekly parade nights (Thursdays 3:45pm to 5:45pm), field days, and residential camps.

Students in Years 9-13 may apply to join the CCF, and it is strongly encouraged that anyone wishing to enrol in Years 10-13 do so early in September. Pupils in Year 9 wishing to become a member of the CCF will have the opportunity to attend an Interest Evening with their parents on Thursday 1 October at 7.00pm. This will provide background information on the aims and ideals of the CCF, details on the three Services, and an opportunity to ask questions. Interested pupils will then be able to sign up for a series of taster sessions, where they can experience a typical CCF parade night. This will help pupils to decide which Service they would like to join.

Lieutenant Colonel A Baggs, Contingent Commander

CCF Field weeks represent an opportunity for CCF Cadets to undertake training for the syllabus of their respective Section, which requires specialist locations, equipment and facilities. This year, the first field week for cadets from Years 10-13 will take place from ***12 – 16 October 2026****. Core areas of training will include Skill at Arms, and Adventure Training.*

LOWER SIXTH PHASE 1 REPORT

Friday 2 October 2026

The Lower Sixth Phase 1 Report offers an insightful evaluation regarding your child's adaptation to their A Level academic programme. This report presents a single numerical rating that serves as an attitudinal indicator, specifically:

Grade 1: Signifies an excellent commencement and highly appropriate subject selections;

Grade 4: Suggests a suboptimal start and potentially inappropriate subject choices.

Should your child require additional guidance or support, s/he is encouraged to consult with subject teachers or visit the Sixth Form Pastoral Office. The distribution of the Phase 1 Report marks the final opportunity to modify subject selections, thereby ensuring that all students have a combination of subjects that align with their interests and capabilities.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

UPPER SIXTH PHASE 1 REPORT

Friday 9 October 2026

The Upper Sixth Phase 1 Report will include attainment and attitudinal grades for each subject studied. Students should compare these results with those in the Lower Sixth Phase 3 Report. This comparison enables them to identify any changes or trends and reflect upon their academic progress.

In the event of any concerns, the Sixth Form Pastoral Office remains readily available to offer support. Furthermore, strategies to address challenges will be provided to ensure that students are adequately prepared for the January 2027 Trial Examinations.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

CHARITY CULTURE DAY

Friday 15 October 2026

One of the highlights of the School Calendar is the Culture Day celebrations, which are led by the Charity Committee. Pupils are invited to dress in a traditional manner which reflects their cultural identity and heritage. There are also live performances at lunchtime, along with a tuck shop. All activities help to raise money for HARP, the local homelessness charity, and Essex Sports, which aims to improve the mental health of young people in Southend.

Further information on this celebration will be shared with pupils later this term.

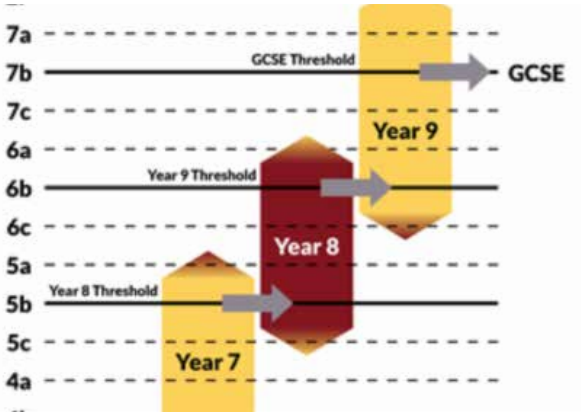
An additional day of charity events is scheduled for Thursday 10 December 2026 and the Charity Committee will be circulating further details on their exciting plans later this term.

Mrs K Revell, Director of Sixth Form

Charity Culture Day 2025

YEAR 7 PHASE ONE REPORT

Friday 16 October 2026



On Friday 16 October, Year 7 will receive their Phase 1 (Baseline) Reports. These is an important report as it is the first indication for parents as to how their sons have adapted to academic study at the School. Parents will receive an initial indicator in the form of a grade from each of their sons teachers, using the School's internal grading system. As shown in the diagram, most pupils are graded 4a (developed performance), 4b (secure performance) or 4c (foundation performance) in the first half term. This helps parents, pupils and teachers to understand a pupil's current level of understanding, and identify areas of strength, and areas for development.

Once the reports have been issued, Form Tutors will dedicate time to support pupils in reflecting on their grades, and developing goals for the rest of the acadmic year. Form tutors will also discuss with pupils strategies to help them improve their grades where a foundation performance has been recorded.

Parents should discuss with their son the content of the report, and the goals set by him, which will be recorded in his planner. Should there be any further concerns, parents should contact their son's Form Tutor via the School Office. The Lower School Pastoral staff are also on hand to provide support where this is required.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

YEAR 11 PHASE ONE REPORT

Friday 16 October 2026

The results of the Formative Assessments will inform the Year 11 Phase 1 reports, which will be issued on Friday 16 October. These reports should encourage pupils to direct their efforts toward the upcoming Trial Examinations. The feedback provided will be invaluable in helping pupils assess the effectiveness of their current study habits and develop a focused revision strategy. Combined with guidance from subject teachers, this will help establish a strong foundation for both the Trial Examinations and the final GCSE examinations.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School

AUTUMN CHAMBER RECITAL

Thursday 22 October 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

The Autumn Chamber Recital will feature some of WHSB's most talented solo musicians from across the School community. The concert will showcase students from the youngest in the Lower School all the way through to those in their final year. We look forward to performances of music from a range of different styles: Rock, Pop, Classical, Musical Theatre, Film Scores, and many more, performed by soloists and ensembles.

Small ensembles such as the Brass Ensemble and Westcliff Singers will return to the stage, as well as regular soloists including Lower Sixth oboist Reuben Fuller and Year 10 trumpeter James Everett. Virtuosic piano performances from Sixth Form pianists Nova Wu and Josef Machacek will delight audiences of this first concert of the academic year.

Tickets are available from TicketSource and are priced at £5.00 for adults and are free for pupils.

Mr A Wood, Director of Music

YEAR 9 PHASE ONE REPORT

Thursday 22 October 2026

On Thursday 22 October, Year 9 pupils will receive their Phase 1 Reports. This represents an important milestone, providing a clear indication of how pupils have begun the academic year and informing the lead-up to GCSE options, which commence in January.

Each report includes a current attainment grade in every subject, based on the School's internal grading system. At this point in Year 9, the expected standard is 6a, with grades above or below this benchmark indicating performance relative to expectations. Pupils will also receive their Lower School target grade. The average target is 7b, meaning that pupils with higher targets would typically be expected to be performing above 6a, while for those with lower targets, achieving a 6a represents strong progress. This context allows parents, pupils, and teachers better to understand current attainment and to identify both strengths and areas for development.

The report also includes attitudinal indicators, graded on a scale from 1 (Exceptional) to 4 (Unacceptable), with 2 (Good) indicating the expected standard. A grade of 1 reflects performance exceeding expectations, while grades of 3 or 4 highlight areas where improvement is needed. Parents are encouraged to refer to the accompanying guidance for further explanation of these indicators.

Following the release of the reports, Form Tutors will support pupils in reflecting on their performance and setting targets for the remainder of the academic year. Where necessary, pupils will be guided in developing strategies to address areas of underperformance.

We encourage parents to review the report with their sons and discuss the targets set, which will be recorded in their Student Planners. Should you have any concerns, please contact your son's Form Tutor via the School Office. A range of support is available within the school, including pastoral care, subject-specific support, and mentoring, ensuring that all pupils are well supported in their progress.

Mr A Baggs Director of Lower School

FLU VACCINATIONS

Thursday 22 October and Thursday 12 November

Influenza immunisations will be delivered to pupils in Years 7-11 at this School by Vaccination UK.

The School acts as a venue only for the vaccinations, and is not involved in the arrangements, provision of information, or requesting of consent regarding the vaccinations. This is managed entirely by the Immunisations Team (although the School may distribute information on Vaccination UK's behalf), and therefore the School is unable to answer any questions related to this service.

Any queries or concerns can be addressed directly to Vaccination UK using the contact details that will be distributed nearer the time

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

RECLAIMING LOST PROPERTY

Friday 23 October and Thursday 17 December 2026

Throughout each half term, any named or unnamed clothing, bags, water bottles, and other items found around the School are placed in the Lost Property Area, located in the East Basement opposite the Reprographics Office.

At the end of each half term, all lost property is gathered together to provide pupils with the opportunity to reclaim any missing belongings. Full details and timings will be shared in advance in the Daily Notices.

Any items remaining unclaimed after the reclaim period will be recycled locally.

Ms E Rose, Premises Manager

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES TRIP TO PARIS

Saturday 24 - Wednesday 28 October 2026

The Modern Foreign Languages Department is looking forward to the forthcoming trip to Paris in October, an exciting opportunity for students in Years 9 to 13 to immerse themselves in the language, history, and culture of France.

This Language and Culture trip has been carefully designed to enrich students' learning beyond the classroom. Throughout the visit, students will have countless opportunities to practise speaking French in authentic settings, helping to build confidence and extend student vocabulary in meaningful, real-world contexts.

A key focus of the trip will be deepening students' knowledge of France during the Second World War, an important area of study for Sixth Form students following the A Level French specification. Visits to significant sites such as La Coupole and the Armistice Museum will allow students to connect their academic studies to real historical locations, enhancing both their understanding and appreciation of this pivotal period.

In addition to its historical focus, the trip also celebrates the richness of French culture. Students will explore world-renowned landmarks, including the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, and the magnificent Château de Versailles. These visits will complement their studies of French art, music, and film at both GCSE and A Level, offering first-hand experiences that deepen their appreciation of France's cultural heritage. An evening river cruise along the Seine promises to be a memorable highlight, offering a unique perspective on the beauty of Paris and the newly renovated Cathédrale de Notre Dame.

Our itinerary also includes a visit to Parc Astérix, a popular theme park inspired by the famous French comic characters Astérix and Obélix. This provides a fun and engaging way for students to experience another aspect of French culture, blending language learning with entertainment.

Overall, this promises to be a richly rewarding experience, combining language practice, historical insight, and cultural discovery. The Modern Foreign Languages Department is confident that the trip will not only support students' academic progress but also inspire a lasting enthusiasm for French language and culture. We look forward to sharing photographs in the next edition of the Diary.

Mrs J Williams, Senior Teacher and Teacher of French

SPORT AT WHSB: STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROGRAMME

The Strength & Conditioning Programme has continued to play a vital role in the development of WHSB's student athletes throughout the academic year. The programme is designed not only to improve performance in the short term, but also to build the physical foundations required for long-term sporting success.

Throughout the year, students have focused on developing strength, increasing muscle mass, improving athletic movement, and enhancing overall fitness. These physical qualities have been essential for athletes preparing to return to the demands of winter sports this term, particularly within rugby, football, and basketball, where strength, speed, power, resilience, and injury prevention are increasingly important as competition levels rise.

Students who commit consistently to strength and conditioning place themselves in a far stronger position to compete, perform, and progress within School teams, representative sport, and future pathways outside school. The level of physical preparation becomes a key factor in performance, confidence, durability, and selection as students progress.

Alongside this preparation for winter sports, the programme has continued to support students currently competing in Athletics and Cricket. These sportsmen are following tailored programmes designed specifically around the physical requirements of their individual events and disciplines, allowing them to maximise performance while developing safely and effectively.

Importantly, the Strength & Conditioning Programme is about far more than physical development. Students continue to develop discipline, consistency, resilience, and confidence through training, while also learning the value of preparation, teamwork, and commitment. These are qualities that benefit young people not only in sport, but across all areas of School life and beyond.

The programme has created an extremely positive training environment where students are challenged to improve and encouraged to take ownership of their development. As the programme continues to grow next term, there will be an even greater focus on supporting the students in reaching their athletic potential and preparing them for the increasing physical demands of competitive sport.

A special mention must go to Paul Isotif, who currently holds the WHSB plank record with an outstanding time of 13 minutes and 1 second.

The programme will continue throughout this academic year.

Mr J Tottman, Sports Coach

TENNIS: LTA DIVISION 2 2026

The School entered the 2026 Tennis season with high expectations and a clear sense of purpose, following the success of winning the Division 2 County Championship two years ago. With a strong tradition of competitive tennis at WHSB, the aim this season has been not only to build upon previous achievements, but also to re-establish the School as one of the leading teams in the county by mounting a serious challenge for the county title once again.

The Year 7/8 squad has made an excellent start to the campaign and has quickly developed into a highly competitive and confident team. Their performances throughout the group stages have been impressive, combining strong technical ability with resilience and teamwork. As a result of their outstanding efforts, the team has successfully progressed to the knockout stages of the competition. Several players have produced particularly notable performances, with Daniel Khan, Max Tuskin, James Packer, and Aarvin Khanka consistently contributing important wins and demonstrating excellent commitment and composure throughout the fixtures. The team has shown great promise for the future of tennis at the School and will look to continue their strong form as the competition progresses.

The Year 9/10 team has faced a far more challenging campaign, largely due to injuries affecting a number of key players. This has meant that the squad has had to adapt regularly, with frequent changes in team selection and pairings across fixtures. Despite these setbacks, players have shown determination and resilience, continuing to com pete positively and support one another throughout the season. While consistency has been difficult to achieve, there have still been several strong individual and team performances, with the squad remaining competitive in a demanding group.

The results from the group stages are as follows:

Thorpe Hall School: 21 April 2026

- Year 7/8: WHSB won 5 matches to 1
- Year 9/10: WHSB lost 4 matches to 2

Belfairs School: 6 May 2026

- Year 7/8: WHSB won 5 matches to 1
- Year 9/10: WHSB won 6 matches to 0

Chase High School: 8 May 2026

- Year 7/8: WHSB won 6 matches to 0
- Year 9/10: WHSB won 6 matches to 0

St Thomas More School: 13 May 2026

- Year 7/8: WHSB won 6 matches to 0
- Year 9/10: WHSB lost 5 matches to 1

Overall, the tennis season has seen many encouraging performances across both age groups. The Year 7/8 team, in particular, has established itself as one of the strongest teams in the competition and will enter the knockout stages with confidence and momentum. Meanwhile, the Year 9/10 squad deserves significant credit for the perseverance and determination shown in overcoming injury difficulties and continuing to compete at a high level. With several fixtures still to come, the season continues to provide valuable experience and opportunities for all players involved.

Mr M Futcher, Director of Sport

ATHLETICS IN 2026

Athletics continues to be one of the key summer sports at WHSB, with another good year of success and progression. Both the Junior (Years 7 and 8) and Intermediate (Years 9 and 10) teams qualified for the Regional A Final of the English Schools Track and Field Cup, one of the most prestigious Schools' athletics competitions in the country. With the standard of competition continuing to rise and qualification for the National Final becoming increasingly competitive, this represents a good achievement for both squads.

The Intermediate Boys produced a superb performance and were agonisingly close to securing a place at the National Final, missing qualification by just four points. While naturally disappointing, the result reflects the quality and determination of the team. We will look to build on this foundation over the coming academic year, beginning with the Lee Valley Indoor Championships and strengthening our middle-distance programme through greater integration with the School's cross-country and Strength and Conditioning training.

Michael Kushimo,100m Hurdles Champion, and Freddie Sankey, 100m Hurdles Silver

We are particularly grateful to the Headmaster for his continued investment in our athletics facilities. The development of the new jumping area represents a significant enhancement to our provision and will provide pupils with greater opportunities to refine their technical skills throughout the year. This investment will play a vital role in supporting future athlete development and ensuring WHSB remains competitive at county, regional, and national level.

The Borough Athletics once again provided an excellent opportunity for our athletes to showcase their talent. WHSB celebrated Borough Champions across every Year Group this year, highlighting the depth of ability within the School. A particular highlight was the Year 10 relay team, who were crowned 2026 Borough Champions following an outstanding team performance. These successes reflect the commitment of our students and staff, and provide an excellent platform as we continue to strive for success at the highest levels of school athletics.

Taseen Ahmed and Freddie Sankey, Hammer Champions

Zion Farunde, Shot Put Champion

George Riley, 1500m Champion

Danyel Oladimeji, 300m hurdles Champion

Essex Schools Championships 2026

Following the Borough Athletics trials, fifteen WHSB pupils were selected to represent the City of Southend at the Essex Schools Championships, held on 13 June. This is a tremendous achievement in itself and reflects the exceptional standard of athletics within the School.

WHSB's athletes produced an outstanding set of performances across a wide range of events, particularly in the hammer, discus, shot put, triple jump, and 1500 metres.

Joshua Babalola (Year 11) and Taseen Ahmed (Year 9) were both crowned Essex Schools Hammer Champions in their respective age groups. In addition to winning their titles, both athletes achieved the English Schools qualifying standard and were selected to represent Essex at the English Schools Championships.

Ameer Salaam continued his remarkable consistency by retaining his Essex Schools Shot Put title for a second consecutive year, once again surpassing the English Schools qualifying standard to earn selection for the Essex team.

There were further outstanding performances from Nathan Moradeke-Johnson, who claimed the Essex title in the discus, George Riley, who secured an excellent silver medal in the 1500 metres, and Sochima Okoye, who produced a superb performance to finish third in the triple jump.

These results are a testament to the dedication, commitment and talent of our athletes and reinforce WHSB's reputation as one of the leading athletics schools in Essex.

Michael Kushimo was selected to represent Essex at the Regional Schools Combined Events Final, where he played an important role in helping the county secure the 2026 team title. Competing across five demanding disciplines — 100m hurdles, shot put, javelin, high jump, and 1500 metres — Michael produced a series of outstanding performances to finish an excellent fifth overall against the strongest multi-event athletes in the region.

Looking ahead, several WHSB athletes have earned the opportunity to represent Essex at the prestigious English Schools Athletics Championships in Birmingham. Widely regarded as the pinnacle of schools' athletics in England, the championships provide our pupils with the chance to compete against the country's very best young athletes and, for those who excel, the opportunity to secure selection for the England Schools team and earn the honour of an England international vest.

Nathan Moradeke-Johnson, U16 Discus Essex Champion

Ameer Salaam, U16 Shot Put Champion

Joshua Babalola U16 and Taseen Ahmed U14 Essex Champions in Hammer

Upcoming events

The autumn term will see the return of a full and exciting sporting programme, with a wide range of opportunities for pupils to represent WHSB.

Cross country begins again in September, with the Lee Valley Cross Country Championships taking place early in the term, followed by the English Schools Cup in October, the Borough Cross Country Championships in November, and the Essex Schools Championships in January 2027.

Rugby and football also returns at the start of the first half term, with a busy schedule of friendly matches, cup competitions and league fixtures. Basketball will resume after the October half term, with Essex and National Cup fixtures running through to March 2027.

Table tennis and badminton competitions will also begin early in September, with Borough and Essex qualification events taking place throughout the autumn term.

There will be a great deal of sport in which pupils can participate, but the success of our teams will require pupils to commit fully to training, preparation, and fitness development. The challenge for all pupils is clear: Get involved, train hard, and represent WHSB with pride.

Mr M Futcher, Director of Sport

CRICKET UPDATE

Cricket continues to thrive at WHSB and we have enjoyed another remarkable year of success. The School's indoor cricket programme achieved exceptional results, with the Under 12, Under 13, Under 14, and Under 15 teams all being crowned Essex Indoor Cricket Champions.

Our Under 15 team won the National Essex Cup Championship and progressed to the Regional finals day, placing amongst the top 32 schools in the country. This is an outstanding achievement that places the team amongst the country's strongest school cricket teams. The Under 14 team also qualified for the State Essex Cup Finals Day, further demonstrating the quality of cricket being played throughout the School.

In addition, all WHSB teams remain active in their respective Borough Cup competitions, ensuring there is still much to look forward to during the remainder of the season.

U15s Cricket Essex Cup Finals Day report

On Thursday 18 June, the U15 cricket team competed in the Regional Finals Day at Old Parkonians Cricket Club. Their opening fixture was a semi-final against Moulsham High School, with the winner progressing to the Round of 64 in the Barclays Knights-Stokes Cup.

After losing the toss, WHSB was put into bat and endured a difficult start, losing a wicket with the second ball of the innings. The top order continued to struggle, leaving WHSB at 32/5 at the end of the powerplay. However, Year 9 pupils Nivain Jayawadana and Sanchit Shedbale produced an excellent recovery, both scoring over 40 runs to guide WHSB beyond 100. James Lewis (Year 10) finished the innings in style with a boundary, helping WHSB post a competitive total of 139.

WHSB's disciplined bowling and sharp fielding proved too strong for Moulsham High School, who fell short of the target. Wickets were shared between Druhvan Appachi (Year 10), Goutham Sanga (Year 9), Jash Dalal (Year 10), Sanay Hiremath (Year 9), and James Lewis (Year 10), while Sam Bharti impressed with an outstanding fielding performance.

In the final, WHSB faced Shenfield High School and, after losing the toss once again, were asked to bowl first. Despite strong bowling spells from Prajeen Raja (Year 10) and Sanay Hiremath (Year 9), along with excellent fielding from Akshoba Sathiamoorthy (Year 9) and Shri Gangireddy, Shenfield posted a challenging total of 184 from their 20 overs.

Chasing 185 for victory, WHSB made a confident start through an excellent opening partnership between captain Shri Vijaykrishan (Year 10) and Sai Vijay (Year 10), reaching 46/1 at the end of the powerplay. With 138 runs still required from 84 balls, the task remained difficult. However, captain Shri Vijaykrishan delivered an exceptional innings, scoring an unbeaten 105, including 10 fours and 4 sixes, to lead WHSB to a remarkable victory.

WHSB reached 185 in just 19 overs, securing the title of Regional Champions and progression to the Round of 64, where they will face Bishop's Stortford High School at Haileybury School.

Under 15s collecting their Essex cup final medals

Under 15s Cricket Team report

Across the season, the team has played 10 matches so far, winning eight and losing two. At the time of writing the Borough Final is still to be played and we are looking forward to this match against Southend High School for Boys.

Several players have produced outstanding performances throughout the season. Captain Shri Vijayakrishnan has led his team from the front, opening the batting and scoring multiple half-centuries during the Essex Cup group stage, before producing an outstanding unbeaten 105 in the Essex Cup Final to guide his team to victory.

Other notable performances came from Jash Dalal and Goutham Sanga, who have each taken more than 12 wickets across the season.

The team has enjoyed a highly successful campaign, with 14 players representing the School throughout the season, ranging from Year 8 to Year 10. Highlights include reaching the National Cup Finals Day, topping the Essex Cup group stage before going on to win the competition by defeating strong sides in Moulsham High School and Shenfield School.

Mr J Tottman, Sports Coach

Under 15s Trophy presentation

Under 15s competing in the Barclays Knights-Stokes Cup

Representing the School in Sports: Presentation of Sports Colours

LIBRARY NEWS

As always, the Summer Term was a busy time for the Westcliff Library, with members of the School community taking advantage of the silent, relaxed study space during the build up to the various examinations. The return of the ever-popular Summer Reading Challenge also saw pupils in the Lower School rewarded for reading at least six books during the Summer Break. This year, we had a high number of participants and wish to congratulate all those who completed the challenge.

The end of last year also saw the appointment of a number of new volunteer Library Ambassadors, each of whom is responsible for a set shift each week. They help to issue, return and re-shelve books as well as help with any literary related questions their peers may have. Any pupils wishing to become a Library Ambassador are urged to keep an eye out for notices and announcements. Currently, we are particularly interested in recruiting members of the Sixth Form.

At the start of this academic year, we have been eagerly anticipating the arrival of students new to the Sixth Form, and the new Year 7 cohort. Pupils joining the School this term will receive an introduction to the Library during their first lesson with us. Like all members of our community, they are permitted to borrow up to six books at a time, for a duration of three weeks.

Another exciting event specifically for Year 7 pupils is the School's annual participation in the BookTrust's Bookbuzz Programme, which has been developed to support schools in getting young people excited about reading. Giving all Year 7 pupils the chance to choose and keep a book from 16 specially selected titles, this is always popular with the pupils. Here are some of the things that the current Year 8 pupils said about last year's selection of books:

Keven Chen, Year 8

There were a variety of different books, but I picked The Book of Useless Knowledge since I am more into non-fiction books. Not only is it strengthening my love of reading; I am also learning different things. For example, did you know that a zebra is actually black with white stripes?

Nate Cavalier, Year 8

I chose Reek by Alastair Chisholm as it drew me in because people had to buy clean air to survive the 'reek' (a cloud of toxic air). This makes me more globally aware of how pollution can affect the future, and how we should make a change. The book also taught me how people can be addicted to money, so that they do not want to help people as they will not profit from it.

Penmanship Club

The Library is also home to Mrs Oats' Penmanship Club. Pupils' handwriting is monitored by teachers across all subjects, and anyone considered in need of assistance is referred. During the Club's sessions handwriting is continually assessed, the aim being for the pupils to improve to a point whereby their attendance is no longer required.

Handwriting is of utmost importance as, although its quality is not assessed in public examinations, it is vital that all pupils' writing is legible, so their work can be read and marked correctly. If pupils do not improve enough, they will be asked to continue attending future sessions. We hope the pupils are finding these sessions supportive and helpful.

Lifelong Readers Initiative

All pupils at Westcliff High School for Boys take part in the Lifelong Readers Initiative in order to develop their intellectual curiosity, global awareness and to become more effective communicators. Research has proven that reading improves writing and comprehension skills, general knowledge and gives a better understanding of other cultures. Reading is also one of the most enjoyable and enriching hobbies and the aim of Lifelong Readers is to instil a love of reading for pleasure.

The titles chosen for each of Years 7, 8 and 9 are chosen because they are challenging and cover a variety of themes

and topics, also introducing new vocabulary and increasing reader confidence. They have been chosen to give an insight into other worlds and cultures, as well as giving pupils an understanding of and respect for the nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage/ Civil Partnership, Pregnancy/ Maternity, Race, Religion/Belief, Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

The books chosen are as follows:

Year 7
- Autumn Term: Northern Lights by Philip Pullman
- Spring Term: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night by Mark Haddon
- Summer Term: I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

Year 8
- Autumn Term: The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins
- Spring Term: Boys Don't Cry by Malorie Blackman
- Summer Term: A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson

Year 9
- Autumn Term: The War of The Worlds by H G Wells
- Spring Term: Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
- Summer Term: Touching the Void by Joe Simpson

These books are to be read during the classes' library lessons and Mr Northfield and Mrs Oats also devise quizzes about these texts to ensure understanding.

Book reviews

Finally, we would like to remind all members of the community that the Library will continue to be open from 8.00am until 4.30pm this year, and that all are also welcome to visit during lunch or break times. For anyone looking to widen their reading habits, we hope you enjoy these book reviews from our pupils.

Henry Eynon,
Year 10

Wuthering Hights is one of the most famous romance novels of all time and after reading Shelly's Frankenstein as part of the Lifelong Reader Initiative, I was inspired to read another classic.

I found Wuthering Hights incredibly gripping from the first chapter, as the story is told from the perspective of a maid, who is sharing her memories with the narrator after he meets Heathcliff. I felt that this immediately hooked me as I wanted to know the origins of Heathcliff's blunt and grumpy personality.

The novel explores themes of class and expectations: true love, grief, and the effects of heartbreak. Overall, it is a deeply interesting book with many interpretations of story, prompting intriguing thought that I really enjoyed

I would recommend this book to anyone who wishes to explore reading at a higher level, or classic novels.

Max Lippe,
Year 8

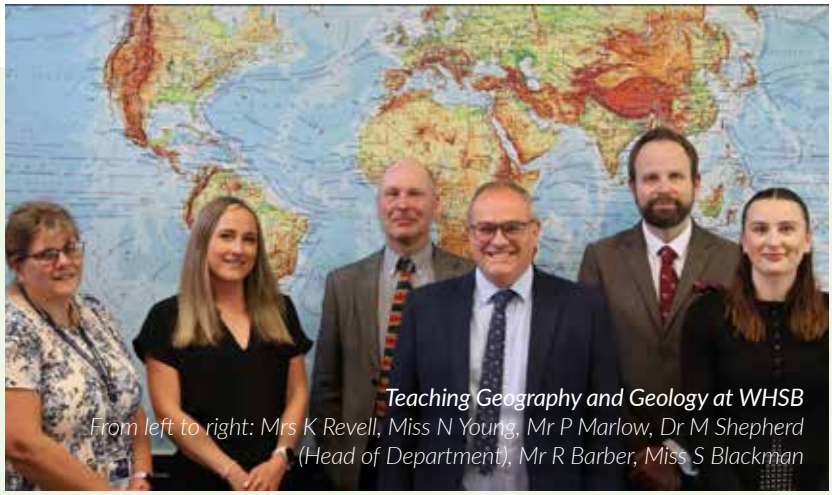
Sunrise on the Reaping is a prequel to the dark, teen-fantasy Hunger Games series. Set in a dystopian version of the near future, the story follows Haymitch Abernathy, a sixteen-year-old boy of district 12, forced, by the Capitol, to compete in a gruelling battle to the death against other tributes in a live competition broadcast across Panem. Soon he realises he must try to stop the Capitol, and the hunger games, at all costs
This is a thrilling and page turning adventure that you cannot stop reading. It really creates an opportunity to think about what could happen in the future if we are not careful. The characters and setting have been very well crafted, and the descriptions really make the book feel alive.

Mrs J Oats and Mr O Northfield,
Librarian & Assistant Librarian

SPOTLIGHT ON GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY AT WHSB

The Geography and Geology Department at WHSB is a great place to study the world around us, whether it is human geography, physical landforms, or our geological history. Our staff strive to combine outstanding academic achievement with engaging and enriching learning experiences. Our students can take part in fieldwork investigations, overseas visits such as the Norway trip, and activities through the Geography Society. These experiences help students to develop independence, curiosity, and a deeper understanding of the world, encouraged by a hugely enthusiastic group of teachers. We love our subjects and we want all WHSB students to love them too.

Dr M Shepherd, Head of Geography and Geology



Teaching Geography and Geology at WHSB
From left to right: Mrs K Revell, Miss N Young, Mr P Marlow, Dr M Shepherd (Head of Department), Mr R Barber, Miss S Blackman

Meet our Geography and Geology Teachers

With over thirty years' experience of teaching Geography in schools across Essex, including primary schools, I have developed a strong passion for helping students understand the world around them. After studying at Middlesex University, I began my career with a focus on physical geography. Over time, however, I have become increasingly interested in human geography. I particularly enjoy teaching dynamic and ever-changing topics such as urbanisation and globalisation, which encourage students to think critically about how societies and places evolve.

Mrs K Revell, Teacher of Geography

I studied Geography at Durham University, where I carried out fieldwork on the River Wear, explored peat bogs in the Peak District, and examined coastal cliffs in Hull. My favourite place I have visited is Iceland — it is so different from anywhere else I have been, with incredible landscapes and scenery. My favourite topic to teach is the Water and Carbon Cycles at A Level. I enjoy how relevant it is to current global challenges, as it helps students to understand real-world environmental change and think about how we can manage these issues.

Miss N Young, Head of Key Stage Three Geography, Teacher of Geology

I took my Geography degree at the University of Manchester. The city in the 1990s was far from being the vibrant, energetic, and bustling place it has become today as a result of urban regeneration. Then I made the short hop across the Peak District to the University of Sheffield, where I completed my PhD and developed my admiration for the French philosopher, historian, and social theorist Michel Foucault – his work opened my eyes to a whole new way of thinking. Memorable places I have visited include Iceland, Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, and I adore Paris, but there really is no place like home.

Dr M Shepherd, Head of Geography & Geology

I studied for a BA in Human Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London, where I developed a strong interest in how people interact with cities and environments. A particularly meaningful experience was my visit to Nicosia in Cyprus, the world's last divided capital city. Observing the physical and social separation between the Greek Cypriot south and Turkish Cypriot north brought human geography concepts to life, illustrating themes of political conflict, identity, and the impact of borders on everyday life.

Miss S Blackman, Teacher of Geography

It is a real pleasure teaching Geography at WHSB and even though I am the longest serving member of the Team, I still feel I am learning more about the School every day. I find the pupils intellectually curious and engaging young people with really intelligent questions every single lesson. Learners readily participate in a wide range of Geography-themed House events and activities each year, and are always willing to try something new. It is amazing that so many of our students create activities for others to participate in and help run events and look after each other so well. I would encourage students to broaden their geographical knowledge by regularly visiting the superb Geography and Geology section in the School Library, and to take a look at the brilliant collection of rocks, minerals, and fossils in corridor displays as you walk by.

Mr R Barber, Teacher of Geography

Once I had completed my degree in Geology and Physics, I worked for Shell for ten years in geology-related jobs and then went travelling for a year through South America, Australasia, and SE Asia. I was incredibly fortunate to be able to take a year out of work and it was very interesting as I experienced many things whilst travelling, such as sailing around the Galapagos Islands and experiencing the amazing geology and wildlife. Probably the best fieldtrip I have ever attended was visiting Italy and walking up Mount Stromboli as it was erupting. We stood on the crater edge and watched lava and rocks flying in the air at a relatively safe distance away.

Mr P Marlow, Teacher of Geology

Overseas adventures

One of the great aspects of Geography is that you get to see the world from the comfort of your school desk - from the frozen tundra of Alaska via the searing heat of the Arabian desert, to the sprawling megacities of Asia and the ocean trenches of the Pacific and beyond. However, it is even better when you get the chance to visit exciting locations firsthand and experience our World of Wonder.

The Geography and Geology Department has run a number of trips to unforgettable locations that participants have really valued. Our visit to Iceland showcased this incredible country's breathtaking volcanic, coastal, and glacial landscapes, its idiosyncratic culture, and its impressive hot springs. Our Norway adventure gave WHSB students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to kayak along fjords, climb and explore a glacier as the winter snow started to set in, hike through beautiful waterfalls, and to experience this country's historic city of Bergen. While for those who prefer their weather hot and sunny, fieldtrips to Barcelona provided the perfect setting for exploring seasonal river valleys, vibrant culture, and astounding architecture.

Who knows where we will end up next? But do not forget, wherever you go on holiday with your family – whether to the UK or overseas – you are broadening your geographical knowledge and understanding. If you bring back a souvenir, maybe you could tell your Geography teacher about it or show it to your class?

Fieldwork

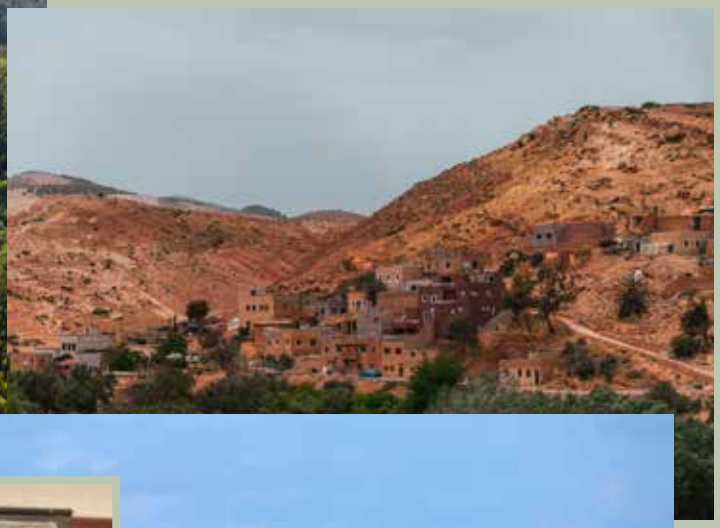
Exploring the world to enhance our understanding of it is a fundamental of Geography. Fieldwork offers pupils an opportunity to apply concepts taught in the classroom to real world contexts and to answer questions in a methodical manner, presenting data in both graphical and cartographical ways. It contributes to personal development by building confidence, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills and it helps students understand physical and human geography through direct observation and investigation in places such as rivers, coasts, urban areas, and rural environments.

At Westcliff High School for Boys, there are various fieldwork opportunities throughout the School. Pupils in Year 7 spend the day in Southend examining physical coastal processes, looking for tourist attractions, including visiting the pier, and preparing for Year 8 by looking at urbanisation, for which study pupils will also

conduct research in their home area. In Year 9, pupils follow the enquiry approach to explore the School's microclimate. Fieldwork is an integral part of the GCSE course, and pupils study different urban environments (such as social inequality in Westcliff-on-Sea) and the interactions of people with their natural environment at Walton-on-the-Naze.

To support the preparation of the Sixth Form Geographers for their Non-Examined Assessment, they visit Belfairs Wood as a local ecosystem, and Brick Lane London to examine the characteristics of a place. Geography A Level students frequently obtain outstanding results in their Independent Investigation coursework projects. Fieldwork develops important geographical skills, including data collection, analysis, mapping, and interpretation. Students learn enquiry skills by asking questions, investigating issues, and drawing conclusions based on evidence. These skills are transferable and support wider academic development.

Mrs K Revell, Teacher of Geography



Geography in the Headlines: How Year 9 Pupils are Connecting Classroom Learning to the Real World

At Westcliff High School for Boys, Geography is far more than maps and case studies; it is a subject that helps students make sense of the world around them. Geography sits at the very heart of many of today's most important news stories. In the summer term, a group of pupils from Year 9 were exploring this powerful connection through an engaging project linking current affairs to the Geography they study in the classroom.

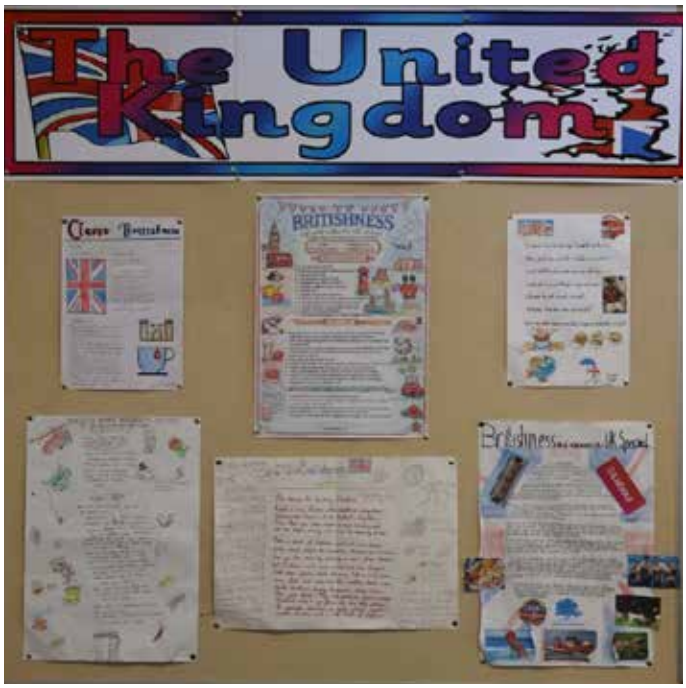
The project challenged these pupils to select a recent news article of interest and investigate the geographical concepts behind the story. The aim was not simply to summarise the news, but to dig deeper - to ask why events are happening, where they are happening, and how they connect to wider global patterns and processes.

One of the key learning points from the project was just how frequently Geography appears in the headlines. Many pupils initially assumed Geography-related news would be limited to natural disasters such as earthquakes or hurricanes. However, as they explored a range of media sources, it quickly became clear that Geography underpins a much wider variety of global issues.

This Year 9 project has highlighted the importance of Geography in helping all students become informed, globally aware citizens. By engaging with real-world issues, Year 9 pupils have developed a greater awareness of the challenges facing different parts of the world, as well as the interconnected nature of these challenges. Whether examining the impacts of deforestation in the Amazon, the causes of drought in East Africa, or the pressures of urbanisation in rapidly growing cities, students have seen first-hand that local events are often part of much larger global systems. Geography provides the framework to understand these links.

The success of the project demonstrates how powerful it can be to connect classroom learning with current events. Geography is not just about learning facts; it is also about developing the skills needed to interpret and respond to the world around us. As future challenges such as climate change, resource management, and population growth continue to shape our planet, the ability to think geographically will be increasingly important. The work of our Year 9 pupils shows that the geographers of the future are already beginning to engage with these issues thoughtfully, critically, and with a clear sense of curiosity.

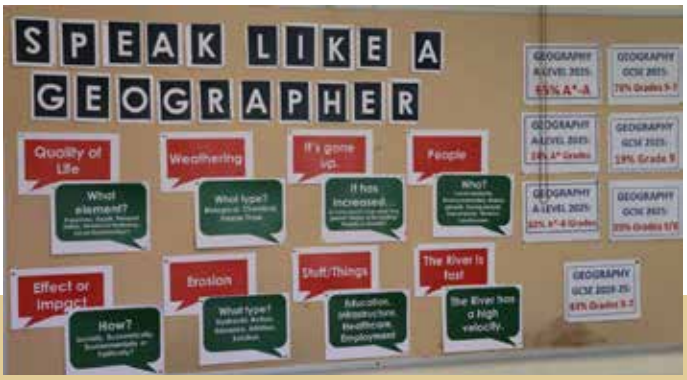
At WHSB, Geography is more than a subject - it is a way of understanding the world.



Geology Displays in E3

If you have not visited E3 recently, now is a good time to call in and explore our "Geology Mysteries" board. Can you solve the clues behind the intriguing puzzles — or perhaps even devise your own mysteries about the Earth? There is also space on Geology Island for some new additions. Take part in our competition to create a profile for a rock and see if it earns a place on the board. Please speak to Miss Young if you have any questions.

Miss S Blackman, Teacher of Geography



Geography Themed House Events 2026

This academic year, pupils have participated in a range of Geography-themed House events. These have involved collaboration and teamwork, and participants have developed literacy and oracy skills as well as having fun. Here are some examples.

Mr R Barber, Teacher of Geology

Research Project and Presentation October 2025

House Geography May 2026

House Countries Challenge Summer 2026

House Treasure Maps Challenge January 2026

Membership of the Royal Geographical Society

WHSB is a member of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), the UK's learned society and professional body for Geography. The RGS has championed and advanced the discipline of Geography since it was founded in 1830. It supports geographical research, education, and fieldwork and expeditions, as well as advocating on behalf of the discipline, supporting geographers in professional practice, and promoting Geography to public audiences. Membership enables WHSB to take part in a variety of initiatives. Full details can be found at https://rgs.org/schools

School Essay competition

Sixth Form students often take part in the School Essay competition run annually by the RGS. It is a great way to develop geographical knowledge and understanding and can be a useful addition to a UCAS application. This year's title is: What factors drive migration, how are patterns shifting and what are the consequences?

Virtual work experience

The RGS offers a free virtual work experience programme focusing on careers using geography. It introduces a variety of organisations that employ geographers, and guides pupils through the range of jobs that professional geographers do across four themed modules: Hazards and risk in the real world; Shaping cities and communities; Sustainable resources; and mapping the world with GIS.

Young Geographer of the Year

The RGS also runs the Young Geographer of the Year competition. This year they are inviting students from Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4, and Key Stage 5 to show off what they know about rivers by creating a poster showcasing the processes that shape rivers, the features they create, and the many ways they are used by both people and nature.

School Member Lectures

The RGS also runs a series of lectures, including a series of School Member events, held at the home of the RGS in Kensington Gore, which we have been lucky enough to attend. Other lectures are streamed online too.

Dr M Shepherd, Head of Geography and Geology

WHSB's Geography Society

Geography Society meets every Monday lunchtime, where students enjoy presenting and discussing a wide range of engaging topics. Recent themes have included exploring both the physical and human geography within popular culture, drawing on examples from Game of Thrones, Stranger Things, and The Traitors. Students have also extended their A Level studies beyond the curriculum through thought-provoking discussions such as "Is Golf a Waste of Space?", examining land use and water consumption, and "The Impact of Formula One", considering its economic and environmental implications. Our Sixth Form Geography Subject Prefects have been outstanding in leading, organising, and planning these sessions, helping to create a vibrant and stimulating environment for all participants. You are strongly encouraged to come along too, as everybody is welcome.

Miss N Young, Head of Key Stage Three Geography and Teacher of Geology

GCSE Geography mentoring and lunchtime revision quizzes

Studying Geography and Geology is about developing an interest and love for the world around us in all its glory, but focus often turns as well towards public examinations. Results at GCSE have been impressively above School averages for many years, but every year there are some pupils who need a little helping hand. This is when mentoring plays its part. In Geography, Subject Prefects pass on their friendly wisdom by supporting Year 11 pupils during lunchtime mentoring sessions in the Spring term. Similarly, in Geology GCSE pupils mentor their peers, teaching key ideas and helping to refine examination technique. As those GCSE examinations draw close, lunchtime revision quizzes in Geography provide pupils with another chance to test their knowledge (or to fill in any remaining gaps).

Dr M Shepherd, Head of Geography

Going places with Geography

Geography particularly appeals to those students who like to get outside the classroom and see theory in action, but academic Geography is highly valued and helps to open doors to future careers.

Here, a few former WHSB students reflect on their time studying Geography at A Level and where they went to next.

Sammy Joujou, Old Westcliffian (2014-2021)

Although I ultimately pursued a Mathematics degree at university, my passion for Geography never faded. In fact, I found a way to combine my two favourite subjects in my dissertation, exploring how the Lotka-Volterra model – typically used in population dynamics – could be applied to geographical systems. Fast forward to today, and I am working at Deutsche Bank in the Commercial Real Estate division. Here, the skills and understanding I gained from Geography are invaluable - each month, I assess the sustainability impact of our projects, a task directly rooted in the environmental and human geography I studied. Beyond technical applications, Geography was my only essay-based A-Level. This experience was instrumental in teaching me how to articulate complex ideas clearly and persuasively – a soft skill that is absolutely invaluable in any professional environment. Finally, my love for travel, sparked by exploring diverse cultures and landscapes in Geography, continues to be a driving force in my personal life, constantly enriching my understanding of the world. Even after five years of being away from Westcliff, Geography is definitely one of the subjects I look back on most fondly.

William Brenton, Old Westcliffian (2015-2022)

I chose Geography at A-level because I enjoyed understanding how people, economies and environments are connected, and how global issues can affect everyday life. I was particularly interested in topics such as globalisation, superpowers, and the water cycle. Studying Geography helped me develop a range of transferable skills, including data analysis, research, problem-solving, and critical thinking. It also improved my ability to interpret trends, present information clearly, and work independently.

These skills have been valuable in my career, as I completed a degree apprenticeship at Visa and now work there full-time. In my role, I use these analytical and communication skills to help understand markets, consumer behaviour, and the wider economic factors that influence the payments industry and manage the relationships with clients.

Aadel Shamsuddin, Old Westcliffian (2017-2024)

My experiences of having studied Geography to A-Level fill me with nothing but great memories. Today, I am a year two student at Loughborough University, studying Urban Planning - a subject I would have never considered if it was not for the support and guidance of the Geography Department. Whilst admittedly I chose Geography at GCSE purely out of my ability to identify flags correctly and play GeoGuesser, at A Level I was fortunate enough to be taught by four teachers who have had the greatest impact on my life so far, as they brought out my love for Geography. I learnt something new every lesson, and as a result would be excited to come into school, knowing I had Geography that day. Due to the support, guidance and enjoyment I got from Geography, I was able to achieve an A at A-level and a 9 at GCSE, something I would not have believed if I had been told in the Lower School. I was able to transfer this passion into my further studies, where I ranked top of my cohort in my first year. If you are someone deciding whether or not to take Geography, at GCSE or A-level, I encourage you to go for it.*

Lewis Norman, Old Westcliffian (2008-2012); Staff Member (2019-2025)

I first understood that I had a real interest in Geography during a Year 10 lesson at WHSB. I was given a blank world map and, rather than locate the required countries, I produced an annotated map of places I was interested in exploring. My teacher was not particularly impressed with this but on reflection I think it perfectly demonstrates the intellectual curiosity and global awareness that WHSB strives to foster within all its pupils. I do not remember a time where I decided to study Geography at A Level because it was not really a question I had to ask myself – it was never in any doubt. That said, I was awarded the Speech Day Prize for Geography in 2010 and 2012, and I distinctly remember being motivated by the recognition of my hard work and enthusiasm for the subject from my teachers.

So where has Geography taken me now? After achieving my A Level in Geography, I went on to the University of Exeter, specialising in Glaciology and Biogeography. I then decided that I wanted to share my passion for the subject with young people, training to teach in 2016 and eventually returning to WHSB in 2019. My career has taken me to Shropshire, where I am now Head of Geography in an independent school – taking time to enjoy the glacially-sculpted landscapes of the West Midlands and North Wales.

Geography and Geology in Higher Education

Obviously, Geography and Geology are great subjects to study in their own right at School, but they are important subjects at university level too. It is not just degrees in Geology or Geography that are available; the subject content can play an important foundation within other degree subjects.

Land economy

The University of Cambridge Land Economy course is closely related to Geography because it combines the study of people, places, environments, economics, and law. It is an interdisciplinary subject that links many of the themes studied in both human and physical geography. The course can lead to careers in Urban planning; Property and real estate; Environmental consultancy; Law; Government policy; Sustainability and development; and many more. Here is a further reflection from a former WHSB student:

I remember Geography lessons at WHSB being some of the few that genuinely made you think across disciplines – economics, law, environment, policy all at once. That breadth stuck with me. I went on to read Land Economy at Cambridge, a course equally interdisciplinary by nature and which draws heavily on geographical thinking – specifically how land is used, valued, and contested in a changing world. Today, I am near completion of an MSc in Climate Change Finance and Investment at Edinburgh, focusing on renewable energy markets. It is a field that demands exactly the kind of joined-up thinking Geography first introduced me to, and I suspect that is no coincidence. It is clear to me, perhaps only after writing this reflection, that Geography has shaped the direction of my studies more than any other subject at school. I am not sure I would be where I am without it, and that is a wonderful thing to be able to say.

Christian Scott, Old Westcliffian (2015-2022)

Earth Sciences

Earth Sciences degrees teach the evolution, composition, and future of the Earth and other planets. It merges physical sciences—such as physics, chemistry, and biology—with geology, palaeontology, and climatology.

Through studying both A Level Geography and Geology, my long running interest in these subjects has developed into a strong passion which has led to my decision to study Earth Sciences at university. Studying Geology has furthered my understanding of the mechanisms of Earth's natural environment, while Geography has given me a greater appreciation of how people interact with both the planet and each other. The knowledge I have gained has been well consolidated by studies in the field, including the geological history of the Isle of Arran and the characteristics of Prittle Brook, in our local area. The latter contributed to the hypothesis for my Geography coursework. The engaging content of the course combined with the continued support and enthusiasm of the teaching staff has helped me to obtain an offer to study Earth Sciences at Oxford.

Eleanor Jarrett, Old Westcliffian (2024-2026)

Focus on Geology

Geology is a hands-on, multidisciplinary subject, integrating the sciences and mathematics, and I feel that is why it attracts pupils at WHSB. The fieldtrips have certainly been successful in attracting numbers and inspiring students to pursue it at university. I have been in the Department working with Mr Cooper for the past ten years and the results in that time have been excellent. In the past four years, the subject has been the best in School in three of those years, based on average point scores. More importantly, in the past two years the residual scores (comparing a pupil's achievement between their chosen subjects) have been the highest in the School, illustrating the commitment students have shown to the subject.

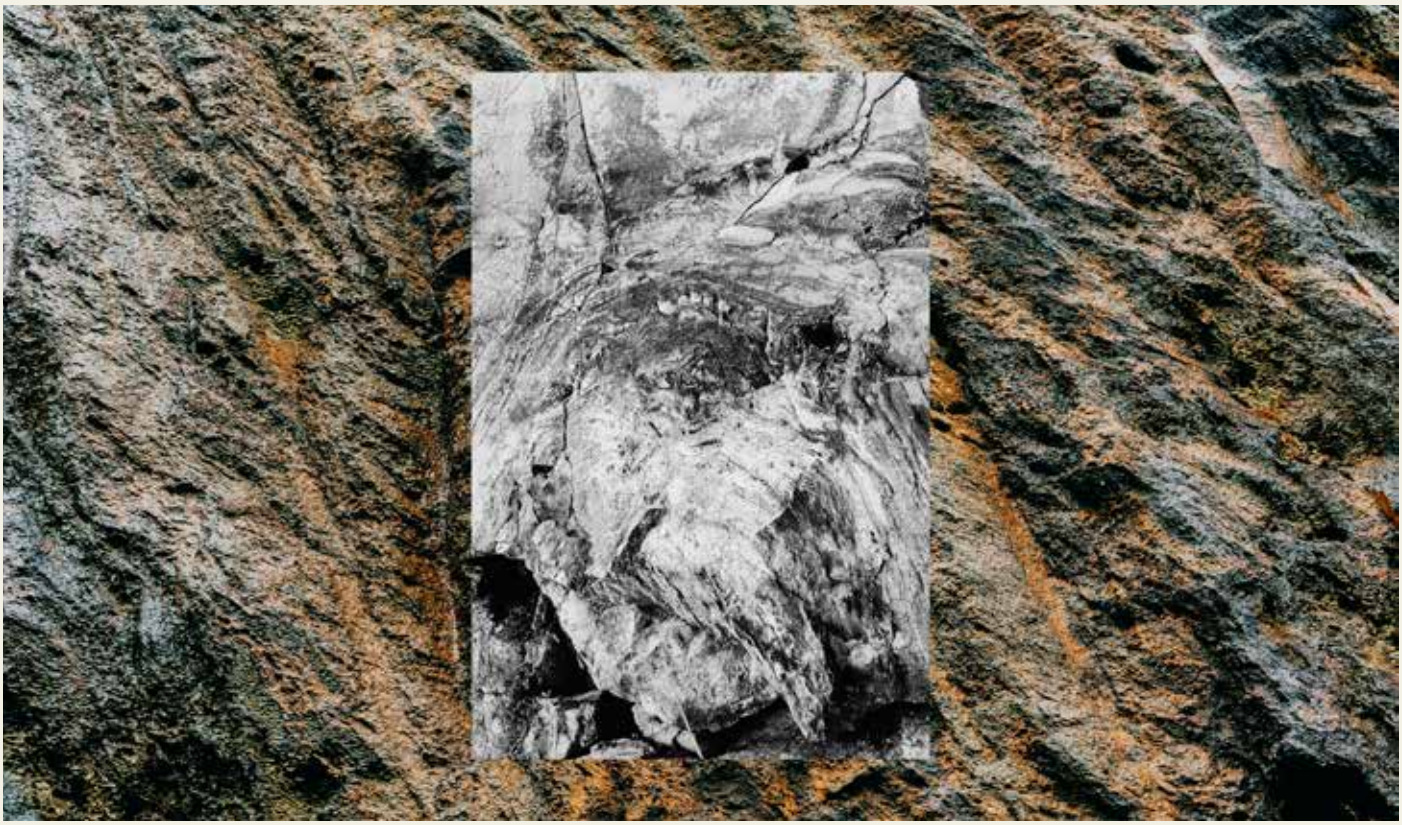
For many years, we ran a trip to Dorset to the Isle of Purbeck, which for some pupils was the first time they had visited the Jurassic Coast, an area of outstanding natural beauty with amazing geology. Lulworth Cove and Kimmeridge Bay are the two highlights of the trip, although Old Harry Rocks on day one is a hit for the geographers in the group.

At A level, notable successes in recent years have been the 2024 group who achieved 7 A* and 2 A grades. I taught some of these students when they were in Year 7 and they had always been an outstanding cohort. The outgoing Upper Sixth group were also an incredibly hardworking and inspiring group to teach, and all wanted to read geology or a geology-related degree at university.

I feel the Scottish Isle of Arran trip plays a role in inspiring students to want to study the subject further. It is a world-class destination for geology, run by a committed group of people at the Lochranza Centre. The scenery is spectacular and if the wind is blowing long enough to keep the midges off you, then you can really enjoy the geology which spans some 600 million years. Highlights of the trip include the ferry ride from the mainland to Ardrossan, Hutton's Unconformity, Laggan, the spectacular Drumadoon Sill, Kildonan in the south of the Island, and the local wildlife – including an adder basking in the sunshine. A truly magical place to spend a week studying Geology.

Notable Oxbridge successes in recent years have included Stanley Upton (2018-2020), who read Earth Sciences at Oxford, Benedict Heath (2022-2024) Earth Sciences, Oxford; and Oliver Walker (2022-2024) Archaeology, Cambridge.

Mr P Marlow,
Teacher of Geology



SPORTS DAY IN JULY 2026

HARP

WHSB

Sports Day Presentations

THE HOUSE SYSTEM: WELCOME TO STUDENTS NEW TO YEAR 7 AND THE LOWER SIXTH

All students at Westcliff High School for Boys are placed into Houses. The Houses are named after birds of prey and are called Harrier (yellow), Kestrel (red), Merlin (green), and Osprey (blue). In Key Stages 3 and 4, Houses are represented on planners and ties. We place siblings in the same House.

House Points are awarded for behaviours which relate to the WHSB Learner Profile and students can gain them for displaying intellectual curiosity, having personal integrity, acting in a collaborative and supportive manner, being open to opportunities, demonstrating global awareness, acting as an effective communicator, and understanding the importance of lifelong learning. Points are awarded via e-praise and students can achieve certificates for milestones. The levels are Bronze (30), Silver (60), Gold (90), Platinum (120), Diamond (150), Headmaster's Award (180), and Governors' Award (250).

House	Harrier	Kestrel	Merlin	Osprey
Head of House	Mr Morrant	Mr Madrid	Mr Sexton	Mr Rayment
House Captain	Stanley Marshall	Marcus Cato	Matthew Agbolegbe	Max Hollman
House Vice-Captain	David Awelewa	Ruthie Eguakhide	Thomas Barker	Jake White
House Vice-Captain	Tisha Van Graas	Kuukua Aidoo	Lily Jones	Mini Israel-Oludiya

The Sixth Form students below were appointed House Captains and Vice Captains in May and will represent their House for the 2026-2027 academic year. Each House is led by a Head of House who is a member of staff, and they manage students within their House.

Although there is competition between the Houses, participation and trying new things is the most important part of the House System. In the Summer Term, Houses enjoyed successes in a range of activities which included Sports Day and House Drama, House Queen Elizabeth Centenary, David Attenborough Centenary, Earth Day Posters, St George's Day Research, Pokémon, Keepy-Uppy, Wall Charts, World Cup Competition, Board Games, World Cup Players Quiz, Football Stickers, and a Summer Quiz.

They also participated in events such as VE Day Victory in Europe 81st Anniversary Research Activity and presentations (pictured above), among other activities.

Upcoming events this Term include:

House Football, House Lego Masters, House Politics, House Cross County, House 'World of Wonder Research Project', House University Challenge, House Festivals and Culture Bonfire Night Research, House Halloween, House Remembrance Poetry, House Remembrance Art, House Harry Potter, House Lego Masters, House German Spelling Bee, House French Spelling Bee, House Spanish Spelling Bee, House Translation Bee, House Festive or Christmas Cards, House Badminton, House Cartography, House Christmas Quiz, House Winter Art, House Up and Down, House Yu-Gi-Oh, and House Cartography.

Many of our House activities come from student suggestions. Students are encouraged to speak to a member of the House Team if they have any ideas or questions.

Mr R Barber, Senior Head of House and House Coordinator

Last year's overall winner of the House competition and The Phoenix Cup was Harrier House with 12,813 points

PRESENTATION OF THE PHOENIX CUP 2026

Congratulations to Harrier House, the overall winner of the House competition in the last academic year, having achieved 12,813 points. Harrier House was awarded the Phoenix Cup in a special Assembly on 16 July 2026. This was a close competition; Merlin achieved second place with 12,752 points, Kestrel took third place with 12,644 points, and Osprey fourth place with 12,567 points.

We congratulate all our pupils for their participation in House events last year, for their commitment, teamwork, and resilience. We also thank Mr Barber, Senior Head of House and House Coordinator, and our Heads of House, Mr Morrant, Mr Madrid, Mr Sexton, and Mr Rayment. Their superb leadership of the House system, supported by our outstanding House Captains and Vice-Captains, ensures all our pupils can access a rich, varied and exciting programme of House events each term.

Headmaster

YEAR 8 PHASE ONE REPORT

Monday 9 November 2026

At this important point in the academic year for our Year 8 pupils, the Phase 1 Report will provide parents with a clear overview of how their son is progressing academically.

Using the School's internal grading system, the standard attainment grade for each subject at this stage is expected to be 5a, with grades above or below this indicating performance relative to that benchmark.

A Lower School target grade is also assigned, the average target by the end of Year 9 being 7b. Pupils with higher target grades would typically be expected to be performing above 5a, while for those with lower targets, achieving a 5a represents strong progress. This information helps to contextualise current attainment, and can be considered alongside the further detail, such as attitudinal indicators. Parents are encouraged to consult the explanatory guidance provided with the report.

Following the release of the reports, Form Tutors will offer further guidance to support pupils in setting meaningful targets for the remainder of the academic year. Where necessary, tutors will also work with pupils to develop strategies to address any areas of concern

We encourage parents to review the report with their son and discuss the targets set, which will be recorded in their Student Planners. Should any concerns arise, parents are invited to contact their son's Form Tutor via the School Office. A wide range of support is available within the school, including pastoral care, subject-specific support, and mentoring.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

School Remembrance Service, November 2025

ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Wednesday 11 November 2025, 8.45am - 9.30am

On this important occasion our pupils and staff will gather in the School Hall to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who died in service during both World Wars and other conflicts.

Our Annual Service of Remembrance includes the entire School and provides the pupils, staff, parents, and friends with the opportunity to share hymns, readings, prayers, and music to remember the fallen. Those who gave their lives in the service of their country include former pupils from Westcliff High School for Boys, and our School Captain, Oliver Street, will lay a wreath in their honour.

The School's Combined Cadet Force (CCF) will also participate in the arrangements for our Service, and will also be contributing to Remembrance events across the city, and in local primary schools.

Parents are warmly invited to join us for this occasion, and for coffee in the Centenary Room following the Service. Seating should be reserved in advance via *TicketSource*.

Headmaster

SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

Thursday 12 November 2026, 6.30pm – 9.00pm

All Year 11 pupils and their parents are invited to this event which will explore the range of post-16 opportunities available at Westcliff High School for Boys. Members of staff will be on hand to offer guidance in relation to the extensive range of A Level courses on offer.

The Sixth Form Block will also showcase the School's enrichment programmes, which include Wednesday afternoon activities, charity events, leadership opportunities, work experience, and extracurricular pursuits.

Throughout the evening, presentations will be delivered by the Headmaster, Mr Dean (Senior Master Sixth Form), and current students.

Mrs K Revell, Director of Sixth Form

YEAR 10 PHASE ONE REPORT

Friday 13 November 2026

For Year 10 pupils and parents, the Phase 1 reports will be issued on Friday 13 November. It is important that pupils reflect on their progress, particularly the organisational and study skills developed during the Form Period Programme, as well as the guidance shared during the Year 10 information evening. Making purposeful improvements at this stage can have a significant impact on future outcomes.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School

YEAR 11 TRIAL EXAMINATIONS

Monday 16 – Tuesday 24 November 2026

Beginning Monday 16 November, Year 11 pupils will undertake their Trial Examinations, marking their first experience of formal examination conditions. This is a vital opportunity to understand how to revise effectively, become familiar with examination procedures, and develop appropriate routines.

The experience closely mirrors the conditions pupils will face during their GCSE examinations in Summer 2027. These trial examinations play an essential role in preparation, allowing pupils to evaluate the success of their revision and identify any adjustments needed. Pupils should approach these examinations seriously, using them as a true measure of their abilities while also easing the workload later in the academic year.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School

YEAR 7 PARENTS CONSULTATION EVENING

Monday 16 November 2026, 4.00pm – 6.00pm

This term, our Parents Consultation Evening for Year 7 will be held on 16 November 2026. This first Parents Consultation is extremely valuable as it gives parents an opportunity to discuss their son's progress with some of his teachers since joining WHSB in September. These evenings are held remotely, using the online programme SchoolBooking. This programme allows parents to book meetings with teachers they may wish to see, and for teachers to book appointments with parents.

Full instructions on how to book appointments will be distributed nearer the time. Unfortunately, there is not the capacity for parents to meet with all of their son's teachers, so we advise that you consider which discussions may be most beneficial and select those subject areas accordingly. The instructions will detail the total number of appointments parents are able to attend; this number will include requests made by teachers. Please note that overbooking may result in cancellation.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

YEAR 8 SMASHED LIVE EXTENDED ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 17 November 2026, 8.50am – 10.00am

As part of WHSB's Personal Development Programme, pupils in Year 8 will once again be taking part in a *Smashed Live Event* on Tuesday 17 November. The aim of the workshop is to increase awareness amongst pupils of the risks associated with underage drinking.

The hour-long event includes a theatrical performance charting the lives of three teenagers and their experiences with alcohol. This is followed by an interactive workshop exploring the social and emotional causes of underage drinking, the impact it has on young lives, the issues of social influence, and the effect it has on decision-making, as well as providing pupils with information on where and how to secure help for themselves and others.

Lower School Pastoral Office

SMASHED

ALCOHOL EDUCATION TO EMPOWER A GENERATION

CAREERS EVENING: ROLES IN THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Wednesday 18 November 2026, 7.00pm – 9.00pm

Our Careers Evening, focusing on roles in the NHS, is set to be another well-attended and highly anticipated event. Over recent years, these evenings have grown in both scale and popularity, becoming a key feature in supporting students as they explore future career pathways.

What began as a smaller careers initiative has developed into a thriving event, regularly attracting a wide audience of students and parents. The event's continued success reflects the increasing interest in healthcare careers and the value placed on hearing directly from experienced professionals.

A central part of the evening will be the contribution of guest speakers, many of whom are alumni. Returning to share their journeys, these speakers offer valuable first-hand insight into a wide range of roles within the NHS, including clinical, technical, and support positions. Their experiences help demystify the different routes into healthcare and highlight the variety of opportunities available.

The event is designed to be interactive and informative, with plenty of time built in for questions. This allows students and parents to engage directly with speakers, gaining tailored advice on qualifications, career pathways, and day-to-day working life in the NHS.

As the Careers Evening continues to develop year on year, it remains an important opportunity for students to gain inspiration, build confidence, and make informed decisions about their futures.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser

MAHLER'S SYMPHONY NO. 6 PERFORMED BY THE PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

Thursday 19 November 2026

Join the world-renowned Philharmonia Orchestra at the iconic Royal Festival Hall for a concert packed with energy, emotion, and unforgettable moments.

The programme features Bernstein's Serenade after Plato's "Symposium", a vibrant and imaginative work inspired by an ancient Greek discussion of love. Each section reflects a different speaker and idea, creating a rich musical conversation full of character and contrast. With a dazzling violin solo at its heart, the piece shifts between playful, lyrical, and energetic moods, making it feel like a story unfolding without words.

Alongside this is Mahler's powerful Symphony No. 6, an intense, large-scale journey that explores the extremes of human emotion. From moments of defiant strength and hope to overwhelming tension and explosive climaxes, Mahler creates a sound world that is both gripping and deeply moving. Famous for its dramatic hammer blows and huge orchestral forces, the symphony delivers the kind of epic, cinematic experience you might expect from a blockbuster film soundtrack.

Please see *Ticketsource* for further details of the trip cost, including ticket and travel.

Mr A Wood, Director of Music

RSE AND MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION EVENING

Thursday 19 November 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

The growing recognition of mental health as an integral part of our overall well-being is a positive development. However, alongside this increased prominence, mental health services face historical pressures and unprecedented demand. At WHSB, we remain committed to providing substantial resources for mental health support, ensuring that all our students understand this vital area.

Our comprehensive PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education) and pastoral provisions have been thoroughly reviewed to enhance students' understanding. We aim to equip students with the knowledge to maintain good mental health and to address potential challenges that may arise. Mr Dean (Senior Master Sixth Form) serves as our qualified Senior Mental Health Lead, overseeing mental health arrangements within WHSB.

As part of our commitment, we invite all students, parents, and staff to attend our Mental Health Information Evening. During this event, we will explore the following key areas:

Maintenance of Good Mental Health and Protective Factors: Understanding how to nurture mental well-being and to identify protective factors.

Recognising Mental Health Issues: Distinguishing between normal mood fluctuations and potential mental health issues.

Seeking Help and Self-Help Strategies: Identifying reliable sources of support and effective self-help techniques. Awareness of Harmful Practices: Addressing practices (such as social media abuse, technology-related effects, sleep habits, and social interactions) that can adversely affect mental health.

The session will conclude with an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

UPPER SIXTH PARENTS CONSULTATION EVENING

Monday 23 November 2026, 4.00pm – 6.00pm

The Upper Sixth Parents Consultation Evening offers parents a valued opportunity to interact directly with educators via the School's virtual conference platform. The purpose of this event is to appraise parents of their child's academic progress since the beginning of the academic year and to provide an update following the earlier issue of the Phase 1 Report. During these meetings, teachers are available to provide subject-specific counsel to support students in their preparations for the forthcoming Trial Examinations scheduled for January 2027. Additionally, teachers will address any questions or concerns from parents.

Further details regarding the event will be communicated to Upper Sixth parents later this term.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

YEAR 10 WORK EXPERIENCE WEEK

Monday 23 - Friday 27 November 2026

This November, pupils in Year 10 will take part in a new work experience programme, developed as part of the Government's initiative to better to prepare young people for modern employment.

Unlike traditional placements, this programme places a strong emphasis on developing soft skills that are essential across all industries. Pupils will not only observe the workplace but also take an active role in recognising and applying these skills in real situations.

The key areas of focus are Communication and Teamwork, Time Management, and Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, as pupils are encouraged to think independently, suggest ideas, and find practical solutions to challenges.

Throughout the week, pupils will be asked to reflect on how they use these skills and consider how they can develop them further.

Employers will support this by involving pupils in meaningful tasks wherever possible, rather than simply observing.

This new approach helps ensure that every pupil gains valuable, transferable skills while also building confidence and gaining a clearer understanding of expectations in the workplace. It marks an important step in helping our pupils prepare for their future pathways.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser

AUTUMN SINFONIA CONCERT

Thursday 26 November 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Join the Westcliff Sinfonia for an evening of engaging live music that highlights both familiar styles and exciting contrasts. It represents a wonderful opportunity to support student performers and to experience the atmosphere of a live concert.

The first half features a rich and varied programme, beginning with John Williams' moving Theme from Schindler's List, a beautifully expressive piece led by Upper Sixth violinist Josef Machacek, and offering a moment of reflection through one of the most recognisable and emotional film scores ever written. Alongside this, you will hear Ralph Vaughan Williams' English Folk Song Suite, a lively and colourful work that brings traditional folk tunes to life with energy, charm, and memorable melodies.

After the interval, the orchestra takes on Haydn's Symphony No. 100, the famous "Military" Symphony, one of his most popular and exciting works. This work is known for its bold rhythms and brilliant use of percussion, a rarity at the time. From its elegant opening to its energetic and triumphant finale, the symphony shows Haydn's creativity and wit, offering a performance that is both entertaining and full of character.

Tickets are available from *TicketSource* and are priced at £5.00 for adults and are free for pupils.

Mr A Wood, Director of Music

GCSE MUSIC RECORDING

Monday 30 November - Tuesday 1 December 2026

On Monday 30 November and Tuesday 1 December, those pupils in Year 11 who are studying Music will record one of the final NEA performances, forming half of their requirements for Component 1.

This performance will be either an ensemble or solo performance. Pupils must ensure that this performance lasts at least one minute, and that the combined total of their solo and ensemble performances lasts at least four minutes.

Pupils should already know what they intend to perform and should be practising regularly in preparation for this important recording. Those who have yet to finalise their decision can and should seek further support from their music teacher at their earliest convenience.

Mr A Wood, Director of Music

THE WESTCLIFF CENTRE FOR GIFTED CHILDREN *GO FOR GRAMMAR!* PROGRAMME: EXPRESS IT!

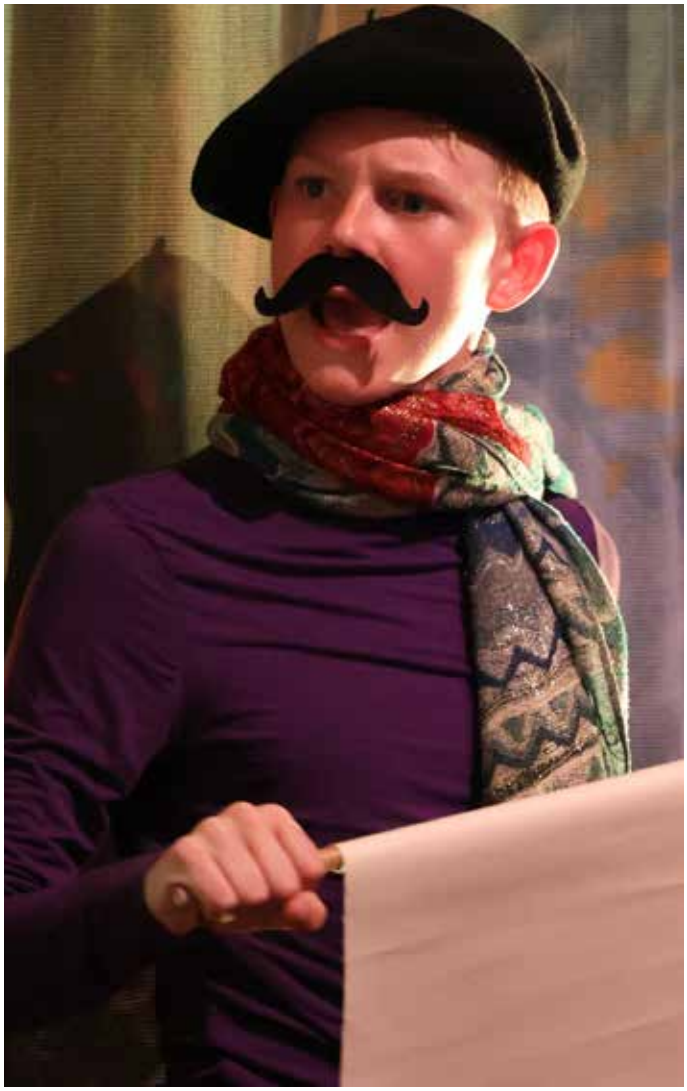
Saturday 28 November 2026

The second session of our *Go for Grammar!* Programme, our series of themed workshops for local Year 5 pupils, takes place on Saturday 28 November. Along with the regular Mathematics and English tutorials, delivered by WHSB teaching staff and designed to support preparation for the 11+ examination, the children will enjoy a series of creative activities in our theatre, studios, and workshops.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

SUMMER CHAMBER CONCERT

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

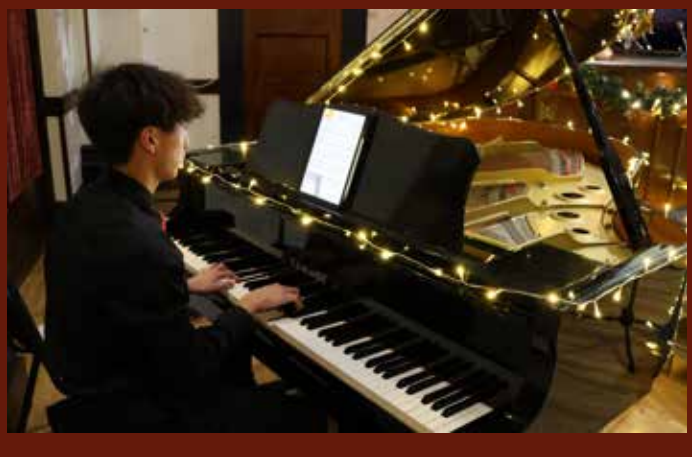


CHRISTMAS WITH THE BIG BAND

Friday 4 December 2026, 7.30pm – 10.30pm

We are always excited to begin the festive season at WHSB as our Big Band takes the stage for our annual Christmas show. Festooned with tinsel and lights, the School Hall is transformed into a sparkling venue for this special occasion.

Under the lights of our beautiful Christmas tree, this hotly anticipated event features the Westcliff Jazz Band and other groups, and is headlined by the Westcliff Big Band. At this popular annual event, the audience is treated to a set of recognisable hits covering a variety of styles, from Rolls Royce to The Foundations, from The White Stripes to Carly-Rae Jepsen – this is an eclectic evening of funky music and Christmas crackers that should not be missed!



Seating for the evening is arranged in cabaret style so our guests have access to tables and are welcome to bring their own drinks and snacks to enjoy during the evening's entertainment. The Parents' Association also kindly provides a Bar for this event, selling a range of alcoholic and soft drinks.

Reserve your tickets via *TicketSource* at a price of £8.00 for adults and £5.00 for pupils.

Mr A Wood, Director of Music

LOWER SIXTH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Monday 7 – Thursday 17 December 2026

The Autumn Term of 2026 will include Formative Assessment weeks for both Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth students. During these weeks, students will participate in in-class tests covering various topics and question styles.

The primary purpose of these assessments is twofold:

1. **Current Attainment Levels:** They provide students and their parents with insights into their current academic performance. By gauging their understanding and skills, students can identify areas for improvement;
2. **Application of A Level Mindset:** The assessments allow students to apply the principles of the A Level Mindset, as developed by Steve Oakes and Martin Griffin in 2016. This mindset emphasises effective study strategies, resilience, and a growth mindset — essential qualities for success in the A Level programme.

Students have already been exposed to different revision strategies, and the Formative Assessments offer an opportunity to evaluate their effectiveness before the Trial and final A Level Examinations. Notably, data indicates that students who excel in Formative Assessments tend to achieve strong outcomes in their final A Level Examinations.

If you have any concerns related to these assessments or other aspects of School life, the Sixth Form Pastoral Team is available to provide support and advice. We extend our best wishes to all students as they prepare for their Formative Assessments.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

YEAR 8 PARENTS CONSULTATION EVENING

Monday 7 December 2026, 4.00pm – 6.00pm

The Year 8 Parents Consultation Evening will take place on Monday 7 December. This event provides a valuable opportunity for parents to discuss their son's progress directly with his subject teachers.

As pupils move from Year 7 into Year 8, they often encounter increased academic challenge and higher expectations across subjects. These consultations therefore offer an important chance to review progress, celebrate successes, and identify areas for further development.

The evening will be held remotely using the SchoolBooking system, which enables parents to schedule appointments with the teachers they wish to see. Teachers may also invite parents to attend specific discussions where appropriate.

Further details and booking instructions will be shared later this term.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School

YEAR 11 PHASE TWO REPORTS ISSUED

Friday 11 December 2026

The results of the Trial Examinations will be shared on Friday 11 December, providing a clear indication of how effectively pupils have prepared and what further steps may be necessary as they enter their final full term in preparation for their GCSE Examinations. For many pupils, the outcomes will be a source of pride; for others, they will offer a clear direction for improvement, ensuring that every Westcliff pupil in Year 11 has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School

WESTCLIFF DRAMA: ELF THE MUSICAL

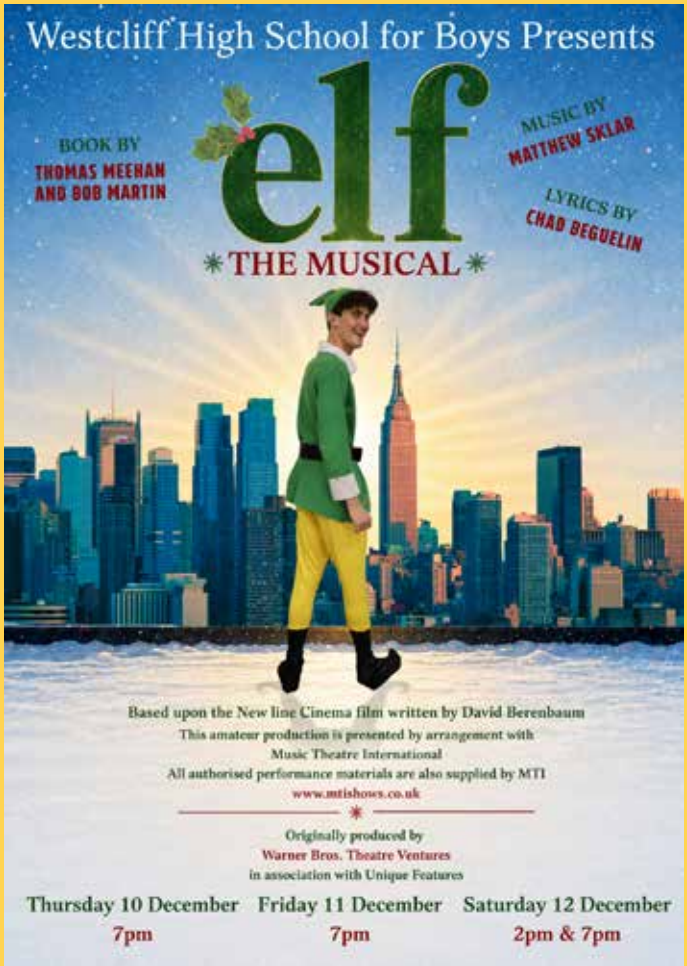
Thursday 10 - Saturday 12 December 2026, 7.00pm – 9.30pm

What will you be doing together as a family this Christmas? Creeping downstairs to check whether Santa has visited? Eating a meal so enormous that the pigs-in-blankets have to be balanced on top of the lampshade? Arguing together over a customised board game? Decorating a tree with a star and a great big fairy (is that any way to talk about Uncle Terry and Auntie June?)? Whatever it is that defines your annual family Christmas, I hope that this year Mum, Dad, Grandma, the favourite Auntie, the funny Uncle, and all the little treasures of the household will join us in the School Hall for our Christmas extravaganza performance of Elf the Musical, which is available to everyone, even those on Santa's Naughty List.

Elf the Musical is a perennial family favourite. The original film Elf was released in 2003, starring Will Ferrell as Buddy, a human raised by Santa's elves. Buddy discovers his real history and sets off to meet a father in New York who is unaware of his existence. There are challenges along the way for Buddy but Santa, his Elfish friends, and a new girlfriend all help Buddy to ultimate, shiny-happy, jingle-jangly success. Yes, it really is that cheesy. The film was a huge critical and commercial success, and the inspiration behind this Broadway Musical which is fast becoming a modern classic, featuring wonderful songs like 'World's Greatest Dad", "A Christmas Song", and "Nobody Cares About Santa".

Whether you feel Christmassy all year round or need a little support in blowing away those Scrooge-like cobwebs of humbug, this is the show this Christmas to get you in that party festive mood. Book your tickets early and join us in December for a glorious and uplifting family musical adventure.

Mr B Jeffreys, Director of Drama



YEAR 11 GEOLOGY TRIP TO THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Friday 11 December 2026

In December, Dr Shepherd and I will be taking a group of Year 11 Geology students to the Natural History Museum for a curriculum-focused visit. The Earth Galleries offer a range of exhibitions highly relevant to GCSE study, including *Visions of Earth, Volcanoes and Earthquakes, Restless Surface, From the Beginning, Earth's Treasury, and Hominid Evolution.*

Throughout the trip, pupils will complete a series of tasks linked directly to their GCSE course. These activities will involve identifying and describing a variety of rocks and minerals, examining evidence that supports plate tectonic theory, exploring surface processes involved in the formation of sedimentary rocks, recording recent volcanic and seismic events, and considering the role of geological resources in today's industrial world.

The Earth Galleries provide comprehensive coverage of the key topics within the GCSE specification, as well as extending pupils' understanding beyond the classroom. In addition, Westcliff pupils will have the opportunity to visit other areas of the museum, where they can explore the history of dinosaurs and learn about the origins of meteorites.

Miss N Young, Teacher of Geology

LEAVERS' CERTIFICATION COLLECTION

Monday 14 December 2026, 3.45pm – 5.00pm

To coincide with the conclusion of their first term at university, our Summer 2026 Leavers are cordially invited to visit the School to collect their A Level certificates from the Sixth Form Forum. This informal event provides our newest cohort of Old Westcliffians, and most recent group of School Leavers, an opportunity to share their experiences with peers and their former teachers. Members of staff will be present and are always eager to hear how life after WHSB is going for their former students.

Refreshments will be provided during the event, and we hope that those attending will also join us for our Festival of Lessons and Carols at 7.30pm.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

Summer 2026 Leavers

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Monday 14 December 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Our Festival of Lessons and Carols is a wonderful long-standing tradition at Westcliff High School for Boys, and this final evening event of the term is a truly joyful occasion.

We look forward to joining together with pupils, their families, friends, and Old Westcliffians to celebrate the festive season through this Service which is modelled on the annual *Carols from King's* service broadcast by the BBC. Iluminated by the glow of our Christmas tree on stage in the School Hall, our outstanding Westcliff Choir will perform a selection of traditional and modern carols, the Lessons will be read by members of our community, and the congregation will join the Choir in the singing of Christmas hymns.

Pupils, parents, staff, Old Westcliffians, and friends of the School are warmly invited to join us for this celebration to mark the start of the festivities. Mulled wine, mince pies, tea and coffee will be served following the Service.

This is popular occasion in the School calendar and seating should be reserved in advance via *TicketSource*.

Headmaster

Festival of Lessons and Carols in December 2025

CHRISTMAS PRESENT DONATIONS TO ROCHFORD HOSPITAL

Tuesday 15 December 2026

Many of our Sixth Form students aspire to study healthcare courses at university, including Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine (MDV). WHSB has been working closely with Old Westcliffian Dr Ivan Shanley and his colleagues at Rochford Hospital. Dr Ivan Shanley is an Old Age Psychiatry Consultant and has previously assisted the School with our MDV mock interviews and a Careers in Medicine Evening. Students have found both experiences incredibly insightful and useful in supporting their university applications.

This year, Westcliff High School for Boys is delighted to once again donate Christmas presents to the patients of the Old Age Psychiatry Ward, something we have done for the past two years and hope to continue for many years to come. The patients at this ward have limited opportunities to leave the ward and to spend time with their families and loved ones, so Christmas time can be a lonely experience for them. We hope our gifts can help mitigate some of that loneliness this Christmas.

A small group of representatives from the MDV Society will accompany Mrs Lo-Whitford to collect donations and gift them to the patients.

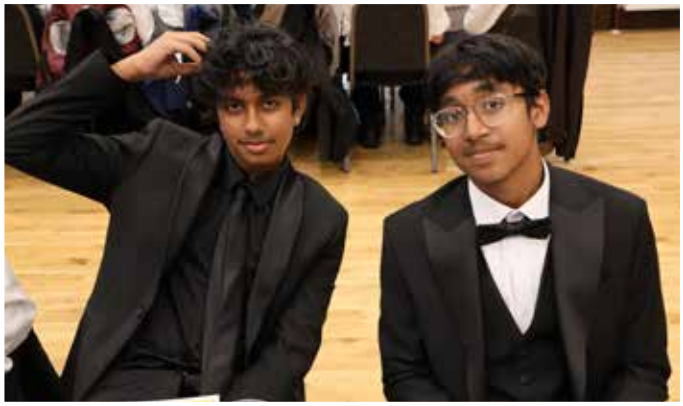
Mrs E Lo-Whitford, Higher Education Adviser for Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary

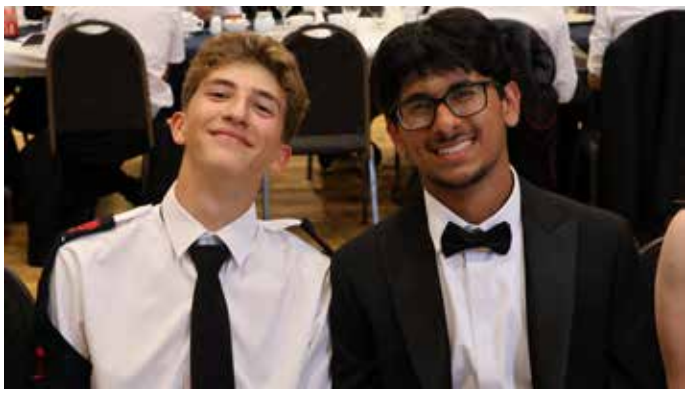
Donating gifts to the patients at Rochford Hospital in December 2025

LEAVERS' DAY 2026

Westcliff High School for Boys

CCF MESS DINNER





SUMMER TERM 2026 IN PICTURES

Aaron, Aiden, Gabriel, and Ethan achieve the School's first LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) Gold Medal Examination Awards

Archie Becks (Upper Sixth) appeared on an episode of Countdown in June 2026

Attending a performance by the Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra at Cadogan Hall in Chelsea

At the Royal Festival Hall enjoying the world-class Philharmonia Orchestra

Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award - Mr Tresidder at Buckingham Palace

Bear wins the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge Regional Final and is selected for the National Final

Congratulating our Biology Award Winners

CCF Army Field Week

Chemistry Challenge Awards Assembly

CCF Tie and Badge Awards

Excellence in Computing: Celebrating with our Award Winners

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Apprenticeships Presentation

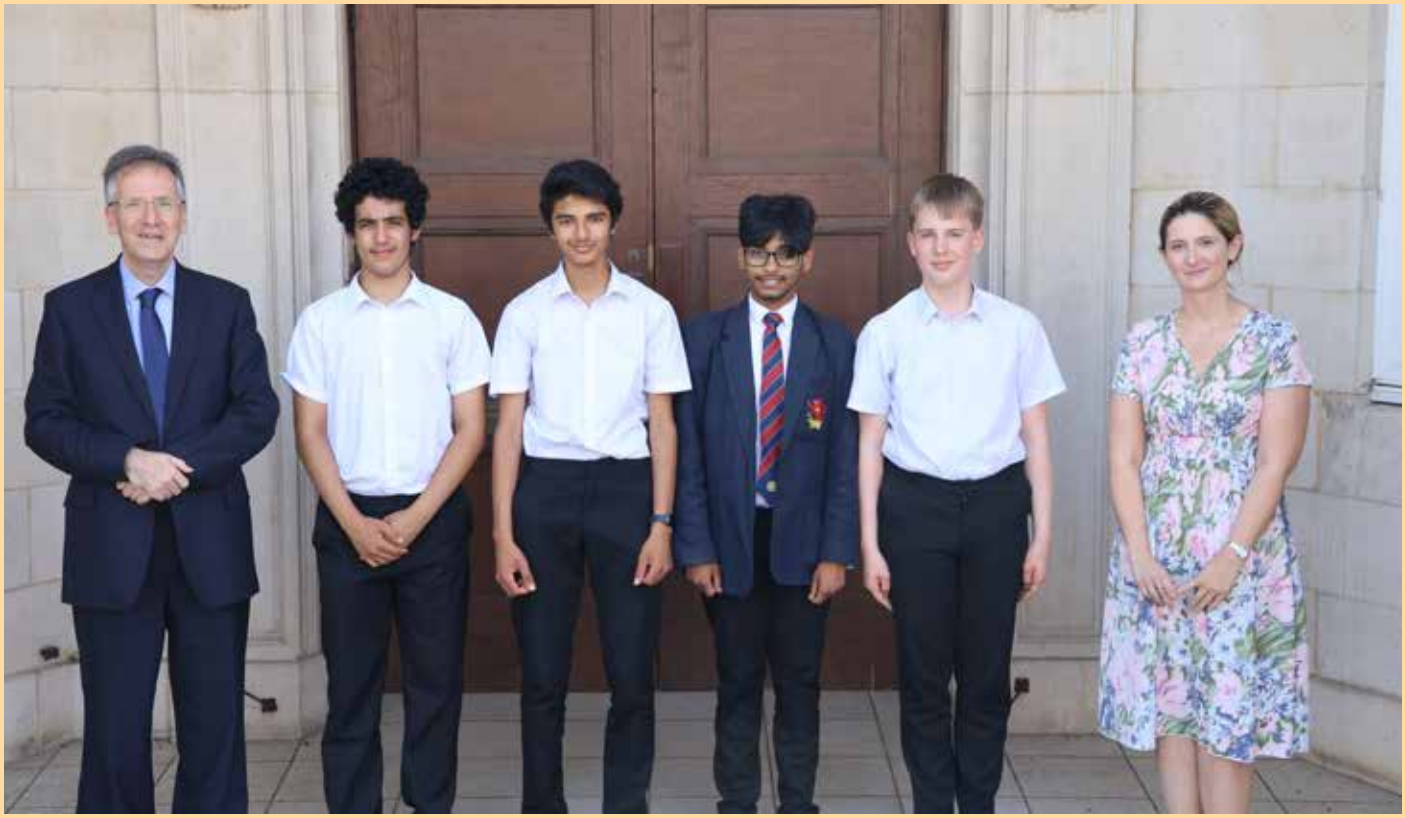
Outstanding Success in Cricket

Enrichment Day

Essex County Indoor Cricket Champions

History Day at Castle Acre Priory and Mountfitchet

Jamie, Sultan, and Misha secure Arkwright Engineering Scholarships



Junior Mathematics Awards

Lower Sixth student Shiloh selected for Team GB (Under 20) Novuna squad representing Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the 2026 Mannheim International Gala in Germany in June 2026

Mathematics Countdown

Members of our Year 10 School Council at Youth Day, organised by the Office of Southend West and Leigh MP, Mr David Burton-Sampson

National School Theatre Awards 2026

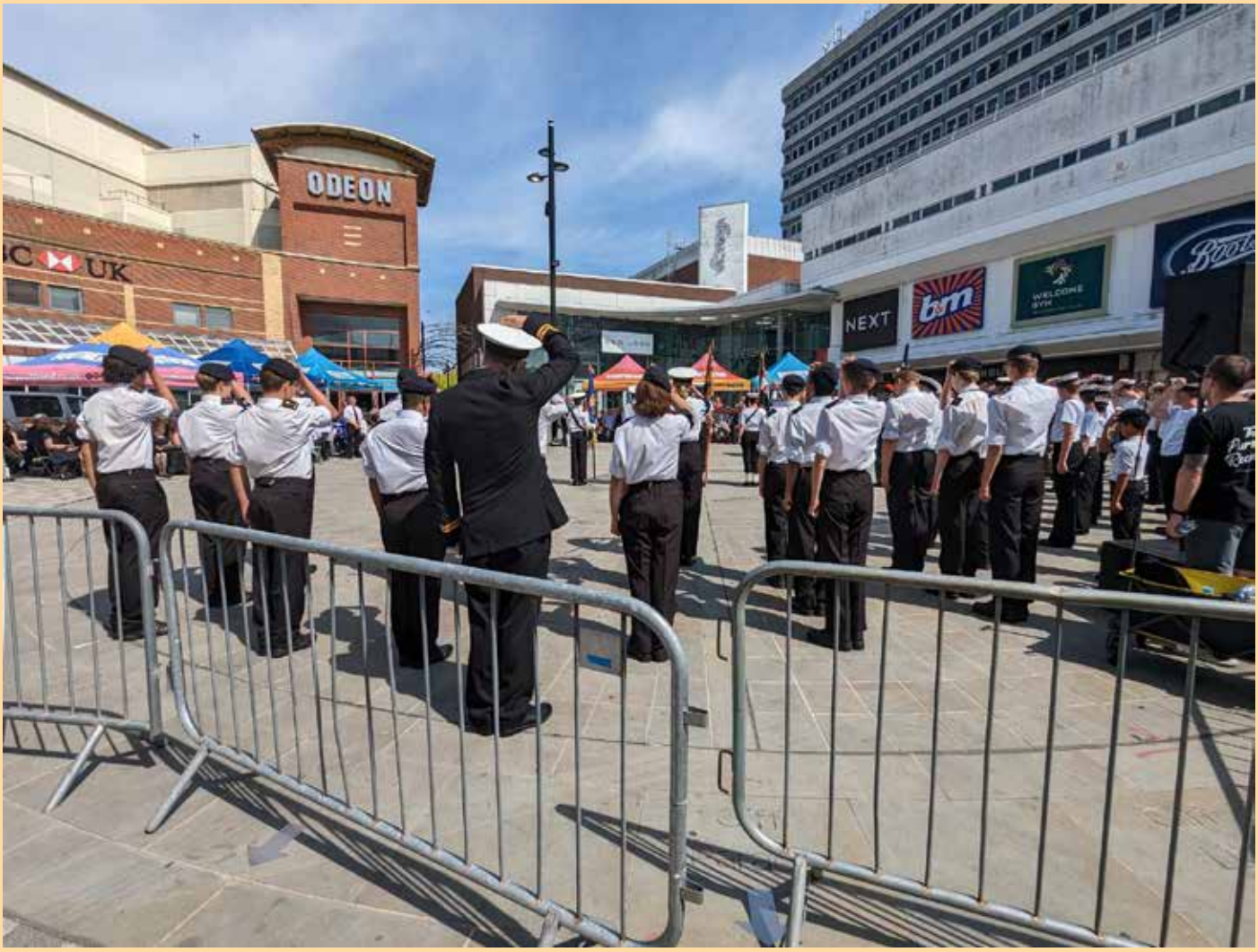
Presentation of Awards for the In2MedSchool Acceleration Programme's Hackathon Competition at King's College London

The Rocketry Group

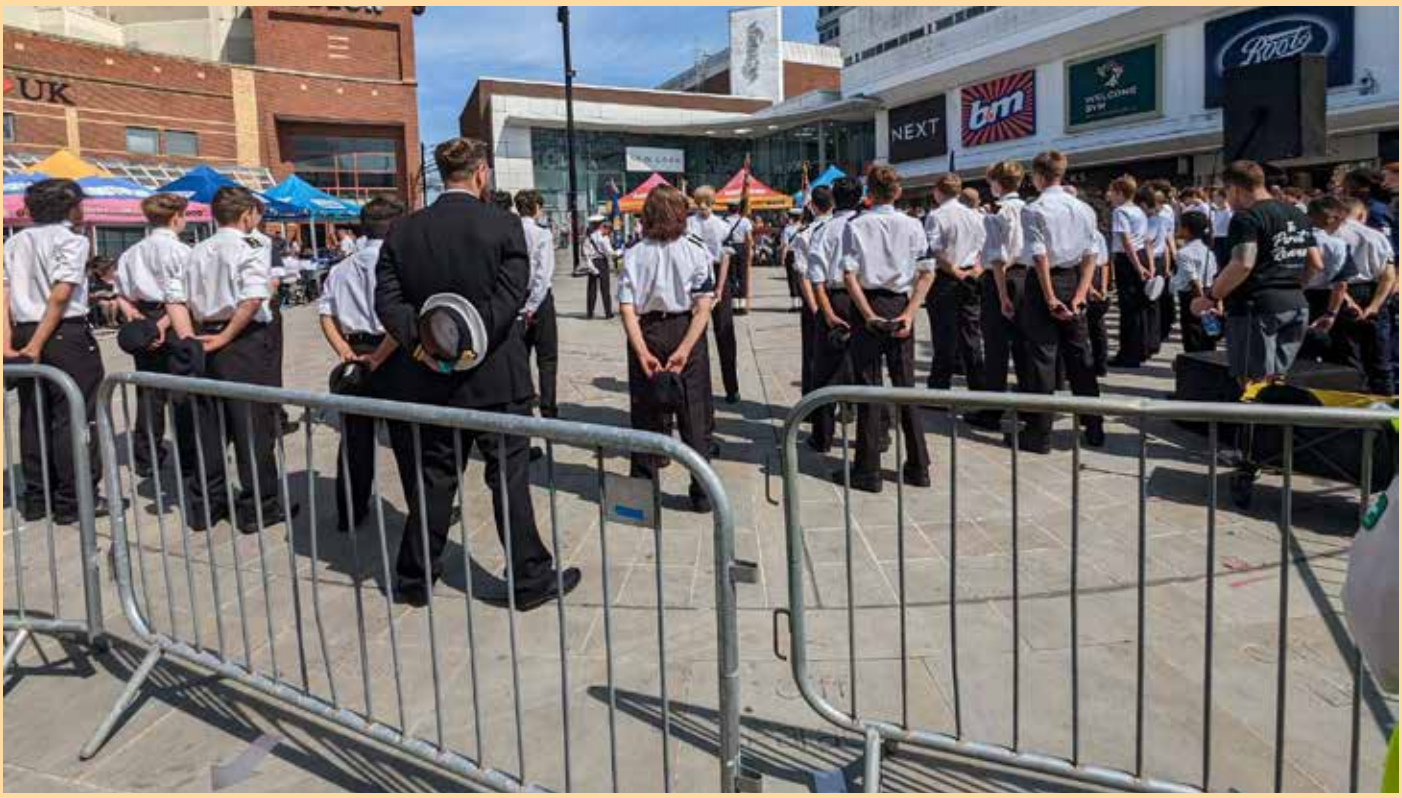
Royal Society of Chemistry Olympiad - Ten Silver Awards for WHSB, and a coveted Gold Award for Alhena

Sixth Form Football Team

H.SAMUEL
THE JEWELLER
Entrance


ODEON
NEXT
b&m

Southend's Armed Forces Day



WARHAMMER
WORLD

Outstanding performances at Warhammer World, Nottingham

Summer Sinfonia Concert

STAY CONNECTED: OFFICIAL WAYS TO FOLLOW WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

As Westcliff High School for Boys continues to strengthen communication with its wider community, we are expanding and refining our official digital presence across multiple social media platforms. This strategic approach allows current pupils, parents and carers, staff, alumni, and friends of the School to stay informed, engaged, and connected through channels tailored to their interests. Our official platforms provide a trusted source of School news, celebrating student success, showcasing school life, sharing key updates, and highlighting the many opportunities that make the WHSB community so distinctive.

OUR OFFICIAL SCHOOL CHANNELS

School Website – www.whsb.essex.sch.uk
Our website remains the central hub for essential School information, including statutory documentation, curriculum information, policies, admissions guidance, and the latest School news.

Facebook - www.facebook.com/WHSforBoys
Follow us for celebrations of student achievement, event highlights, important announcements, and a wider look at life across the School community.

Instagram - www.instagram.com/westcliffhighschoolforboys/
A visual window into daily school life, featuring academic successes, sport, creative arts, trips, events, and moments that reflect the character of WHSB.

WHSB ALUMNI AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

As our community extends well beyond the classroom, we are also committed to strengthening engagement with former pupils and professional networks.

Old Westcliffian Association Instagram - www.instagram.com/westcliffhighschoolforboysOWA/
Celebrating the ongoing achievements and activities of our alumni network.

LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/school/whsforboys/
Our professional platform for institutional news, career opportunities, staff recruitment, partnerships, and broader educational engagement.

Old Westcliffian Association Website – www.owa.whsb.essex.sch.uk
A new dedicated online home for alumni, offering access to newsletters, archive material, mentoring opportunities, events, and development initiatives.

A TRUSTED AND RESPONSIBLE DIGITAL PRESENCE

All of the platforms listed above are the only officially authorised and digitally verified communication channels operated by Westcliff High School for Boys. As we expand our digital presence, safeguarding, privacy, and responsible communication remain central to our approach. The School is fully committed to handling personal data in accordance with UK GDPR requirements and our established safeguarding procedures. Student images are treated as personal data and will never be published alongside full names or identifying personal information without explicit consent from parents or carers where required. We also regularly review our privacy notices, media consent processes, and data protection practices to ensure the highest standards of compliance and care. By following our official channels, members of our School and its wider community can be confident they are receiving accurate, up-to-date information directly from the School.

CALENDAR FOR AUTUMN TERM 2026

Tuesday 1 September	STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY
Wednesday 2 September	AUTUMN TERM BEGINS, 8.40am
Wednesday 2 September	Pupil and Staff Photos
7 - 9 September	CCF Royal Navy trip to Grange Waters
Thursday 10 September	Lower Sixth Education Evening, 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Monday 14 September	Year 7 Parents Welcome Evening, 6.30pm - 7.00pm
	Year 7 Helping Parents to Help Their Sons, 7.00pm - 8.30pm
Friday 18 September	Enrichment Day
	Year 11 and Sixth Form Pottery Painting Workshop
	Upper Sixth and Year 11 Trip to Nuclear Races
	Lower Sixth Trip to Sizewell B Power Station
	Year 11 Puzzles and Problems
	Year 10 Humanities Day
	Year 9 Trip to Imperial War Museum Duxford
	Year 8 Forensics Day
	Year 7 Trip to Thriftwood
	MDV Mock Interviews
	Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Assessment begins
Saturday 19 September	11+ Main Test Day
21 - 25 September	Upper Sixth Formative Assessments
Wednesday 23 September	Year 11 Extended Assembly Dead End
Thursday 24 September	Year 9 Helping Parents to Help Their Sons, 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Saturday 26 September	WCGC Go For Grammar! Day: Get Up and Go!
28 September - 2 October	Year 11 Formative Assessments
Tuesday 29 September	Year 9 Take Your Child to Work Day
	11+ Alternative Test Day
	Parents' Association AGM (Virtual)
Thursday 1 October	Year 7 Extended Assembly: Road Safety
	Year 10 Education Evening, 7.30pm - 9.00pm
	Year 9 CCF Interest Evening, 7.30pm - 8.30pm
Friday 2 October	Lower Sixth Phase 1 Report Issued
Friday 9 October	Upper Sixth Phase 1 Report Issued (Data Only)
12 - 16 October	CCF Field Week
Wednesday 14 October	Information Afternoon for Y6 11+ Passers Only
	Information Evening for Y6 11+ Passers Only
Thursday 15 October	Charity Culture Day
Friday 16 October	Year 7 Phase 1 Report Issued (Data Only)
	Year 11 Phase 1 Report Issued (Data Only)
Thursday 22 October	Year 9 Phase 1 Report Issued (Data Only)
	Years 7 - 11 Flu Vaccinations
	Autumn Term Chamber Recital, 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Friday 23 October	Lost Property Reclaim
	Year 8 HPV Immunisations
24 - 28 October	MFL Trip to Paris
26 - 30 October	AUTUMN HALF TERM
Monday 2 November	STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY
Thursday 5 November	Speech Day - School Closes at 12.50pm
Saturday 7 November	CCF to Orpheus Singers Remembrance Concert
Sunday 8 November	CCF Cadets at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome
Monday 9 November	Year 8 Phase 1 Report Issued (Data Only)
Tuesday 10 November	Parents' Association Meeting (virtual)
Wednesday 11 November	Annual Service of Remembrance, 8.45am - 9.30am
Thursday 12 November	Years 7 - 11 Flu Vaccinations
	Sixth Form Open Evening 6.30pm - 9.00pm
Friday 13 November	Year 10 Phase 1 Report Issued (Data Only)
16 - 24 November	Year 11 Trial Examinations
Monday 16 November	Year 7 Parents Consultation Evening, 4.00pm - 6.00pm
Tuesday 17 November	Smashed Live! Year 8 Extended Assembly, 8.50am - 10.00am
Wednesday 18 November	Careers Evening: The National Health Service, 7.00pm - 9.00pm
Thursday 19 November	Music Trip to Royal Festival Hall, London
	RSE and Mental Health Information Evening, 7.30pm - 9.00pm
23 - 27 November	Year 10 Work Experience Week
Monday 23 November	Upper Sixth Parents Consultation Evening, 4.00pm - 6.00pm
Wednesday 25 November	MDV Mock Interviews
	Almeria Trip Parents Information Evening, 7.00pm - 8.00pm
Thursday 26 November	Autumn Sinfonia Concert, 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Saturday 28 November	WCGC Go For Grammar! Day: Express It!
30 November - 1 December	GCSE Music Recordings
Friday 4 December	Christmas with The Big Band, 7.30pm - 10.30pm
7 - 17 December	Lower Sixth Formative Assessments
Monday 7 December	Year 8 Parents Consultation Evening, 4.00pm - 6.00pm
Wednesday 9 December	Elf The Musical Matinee for Primary Schools, Main Hall
Thursday 10 December	Charity Events Day
10 - 12 December	Elf The Musical Christmas Production, 7.00pm - 9.30pm (matinee production 2.00pm on Saturday 12 December)
Friday 11 December	Year 11 Phase 2 Report Issued (Data Only)
	Year 11 Geology Trip to Natural History Museum
Monday 14 December	Leavers' Certificate Collection, 3.45pm - 5.00pm
	Festival of Lessons and Carols, 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Tuesday 15 December	Christmas Present Donations to Rochford Hospital
Wednesday 16 December	Christmas Lunch in the Dining Hall for Years 7 - 11
Thursday 17 December	Lost Property Reclaim
Friday 18 December	AUTUMN TERM ENDS, 2.45pm
Monday 4 January	STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY
Tuesday 5 January	SPRING TERM BEGINS

Tickets for all Westcliff Diary events can be purchased via TicketSource at https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/westcliff-on-sea/westcliff-high-school-for-boys/

Facebook:
/WHSforBoys

LinkedIn:
Westcliff High School for Boys