

Parents' Post

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Spring 2 2024

Thoughts from the Principal's Office

Dear Families,

Welcome to our latest edition of the Parents' Post. I can't believe we are already two-thirds through the academic year and that we are about to enter the summer term! This is the first time this year we also get to welcome our new Class of 2029 parents to enjoy the Parents' Post. We received 230 first-choice applications for the 180 places at the Academy in September. We are so pleased you chose to join our community and we look forward to meeting with you over the next term as the induction process begins.

As always, it has been a fun-packed half term with a great deal of enrichment and extracurricular work taking place. In this edition, we have reviews of the amazing Macbeth performance that took place at the end of last half term. For those who missed it or want to watch it again, it can now be found on YouTube published by Braunton Academy. There have also been fantastic opportunities for students to develop their love and understanding of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and maths) with the Lego League, Pi Day and the Robot Wars trip.

Thank you and farewells

This half term, our amazing Year 11 students relinquish their roles as Prefects, Senior Prefects and Principal Students so that they can concentrate on their studies in the final run up to the exams. The new Year 10 Prefects have been appointed and are already doing a great job supporting staff and students with lunch duty responsibilities. This week 16 students will be preparing for their formal interviews for the roles of Deputy and Principal Students for next year. These interviews are one of my favourite days in the year as I get to see and celebrate the wonderful achievements of those that have applied, but it's also one of the hardest in having to make the final decision as



Our Current Year 11 Student Team

to who has performed the strongest over the interview process. Understandably, there is always some disappointment, but it is a fantastic opportunity for students to experience workplace interviews. I look forward to introducing you to our new Principal Students in the next edition. I want to especially thank Farli, Finn, Darcy and Brook who have been our Principal and Deputy Principal Students this year. I have had the pleasure of working with them throughout the year to represent the Academy at a number of events. They have been wonderful ambassadors for the Academy, and I thank them for their commitment to their school.

This term we say 'farewell' to Mr Street, Head of Music. Mr Street has worked at the Academy since 2019 and has been an integral part of the Expressive Arts team. During his time at the Academy, he has raised the profile of Expressive Arts and particularly Music with the annual concerts and collaborations with Mr Carrol in the Drama productions and musicals. He will be dearly missed by the staff and students that have worked with him, and I am sure you will all join me in wishing him all the best in his relocation away from Devon.



Remembering Dylan Ng



It is almost a year since the tragic death of our student and friend Dylan Ng. Working with Dylan's closest friends and his family we wanted to come together formally as a community to celebrate what a wonderful person he was, share memories, and plant a tree as a permanent memory of Dylan at Braunton Academy.

As Principal, I have the honour of being responsible for the education and welfare of every single student in the school. Due to my role, I don't always get the opportunity to teach and get to know every single student as much as I would like. While Dylan was at school, we did not get many occasions to talk; I used to say 'hi' in the corridor and cover the odd lesson, but my best memory of Dylan is his smile. It was the most amazing smile and the image I see in my head whenever I think or speak about him.

Since Dylan died, I have had the privilege of speaking to those people that knew him better - his teachers, friends and family, and it has allowed me to learn and get to know the wonderful person that Dylan was. The conversations and grief from the staff that taught him and his close friends gave me the understanding of a fun, popular and - most of all - caring young man whose influence and friendship went far beyond the close friends and year group he belonged to. There are also many members of our community in younger years who looked up to Dylan as a role model and friend because of the interactions he had with them playing sport outside of school and coaching. Dylan was a person who cared about this community and went out of his way to support and make friends with diverse groups of people. I am so proud of the young person he was and what he achieved.

At the time someone dies, it is so difficult to be able to see or feel anything other than pain and loss. However, with time we can get to a place where although that loss is still there, we can also find space for the wonderful memories and the feelings of happiness and gratitude that we had the opportunity to know and love a wonderful human being.

The celebration event that took place gave us all an opportunity to celebrate the wonderful person Dylan Ng was. He continues to be dearly missed, but the event was an opportunity to thank him for being part of our lives.

Dylan's friends chose a Wedding Cake Tree to plant in the school garden.

'Afterglow' by Christina Rossetti

Read by Mr Liversedge at the memorial

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.

I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.

I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,

Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.

I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun;

Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

Thank you to Dylan's family for providing the photographs and supporting the students in holding this event.



A Warm Welcome

I am sure you will all join me in welcoming the following staff to the Academy. Mr Thomas joins us in the Expressive Arts Department as Teacher of Music, Miss Russell has commenced her role as Cover Supervisor, and Mrs Goswell will join us after Easter as our specialist intervention Teaching Assistant and will be working one-to-one and with small groups of SEND students on a range of academic and social skills programmes.

Trustees Update

The Trustees have asked to have a termly update section in the newsletter to allow students and parents to get to know our team better and understand the work our Trustees do. They are all volunteers that give up their free time every term to quality assure the work of the Academy and ensure its continued success. We hope you find these updates informative.

Introducing Julie Fry, MBE – Chair and Safeguarding Lead

My parents met in Ilfracombe in the early 1960s, and with a childhood of holidays to Morteheo and Woolacombe, together with visiting my grandparents in Ilfracombe, my lifelong love of this part of the world was born. In 2020 I realised my dream, when after a thirty-year career in policing with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, I moved to Braunton to begin a new chapter.

During my policing career, I worked with many professional partners to develop better mechanisms to safeguard children most at risk and how we may better prevent and/or protect them from risk and harm. It was during these years that I truly recognised that no one organisation should or could have responsibility for those children's safety and development in isolation. Collaboration and shared purpose were always more effective for positive outcomes.

I have previous experience as a governor in Southampton, where I spent seven years with a 6th Form College, learning much and enjoying the challenge. Shortly after the 'virtual' world of covid, I applied for a role of trustee at Braunton Academy. Little did I realise that I would walk out of my first meeting in September 2020 with the role of Chair.

I am relishing this opportunity to work closely with a school whose ethos is around inclusion and restorative interventions, where difference

is embraced, and children are encouraged to flourish, not necessarily to always be the best, but to be the best they can be.

Working with the students, the staff and communities, it has allowed me to continue to champion the values I hold close: fairness, integrity, and respect. These are standards I find replicated by many of those I have worked with at Braunton Academy and definitely by the Leadership Team.

I am fortunate to be part of a trustee board, who are generous with their time and dedicated to maintaining the school philosophy to empower the students (and staff) to Aspire and Achieve.

We have recently discussed how we can improve our engagement with the parents and communities here in Braunton, and in time we hope to make those conversations a reality, but in the meantime, please enjoy the following questions as a way to get to know us a little better -

Q: Who would play you in a film?

A: Jodie Foster

Q: Cats or Dogs?

A: Dogs (particularly those who no one else wants)

Q: Chocolate – Milk or Dark?

A: Milk

Q: Favourite film?

A: That's tough – ... Sound of Music

Q: Favourite song?

A: Secret Love – Doris Day (Calamity Jane was my other fav film!)

Q: If you could have a superpower, what would it be?

A: Invisibility



Continued over/...

Trustee work: This term the Trustees have done a lot of work overseeing the £1 million bid for a new roof for the Technology Department and the Sports Hall; we have allocated £160,000 of the Academy's reserves to support the bid being successful, and we have also put in place contingency plans to provide short- term repairs in case we are unsuccessful.

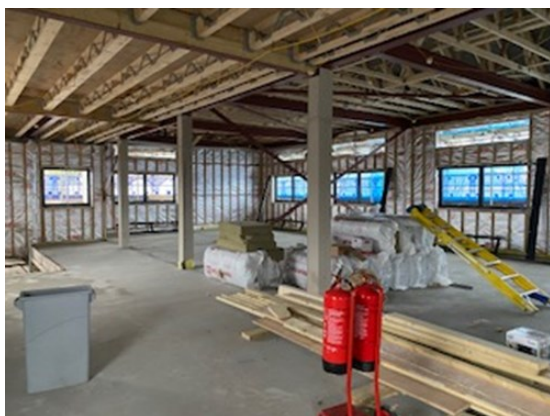
The Trustees have visited the Canteen and met with students and staff to quality-assure the current provision, and work with our Estate Manager to further improve the offer as we prepare to welcome more students next year as part of the expansion.

Expansion Update

I am happy to report that the new build is still on schedule, and with the windows being fitting over the next week, the building will be watertight and the majority of the work will move inside. Last week I had the opportunity to visit the site to see the progress of the work and start to plan the internal designs for the new English classrooms. Below are the pictures of Mr Helliwell in his room as it looks at the moment and the plan for the final design. I also include a picture of the new computer room that will be ready for September this year.

I am also pleased to report that the additional student social space outside of the Technology block is completed and has been well received by the students. Next term we will start planting the herb garden for the Technology Department to use throughout the year.

If this wasn't enough for our Estate Manager to be overseeing, there are several new projects starting over the next couple of months: all the computer wiring is being replaced to support greater Wi-Fi use throughout the school; we are working with Braunton Livewell to redevelop the outdoor learning space that has not been in use for a couple of years; and we currently have a bid in place with the Department of Education to replace the Technology and Sports Hall roofs. If this is successful, this work will take place during the final half term and over the summer holiday.



MFL Speaking Competition

Every year, Pilton Community College hosts a Modern Foreign Languages Speaking Competition supported by Routes into Languages. Students from the whole of the South West come and show off their skills.

This year, Braunton Academy was represented by five fantastic students across four languages – Kitty for Spanish, Clodagh and Thomas for French, Helena for Polish, and Charlie for German and French. There are non-native and near-native categories, which means students who speak a language other than English at home get to use their first language in a room full of attentive linguists.

And so we spent the day listening to other students speak in a host of languages, and our five took the floor for their turn. They prepared and performed a 1-3 minute presentation on their chosen subject of their local area, hobbies, holidays, or family and friends. Candidates are allowed a brief cue card, and props are welcome – Charlie used his to great effect, as you can see in the picture!

Although we didn't bring home any prizes this time, our five showed great independence from their cue cards and injected humour and relatability into their speeches. Despite the nerves of speaking in front of such a crowd in a foreign language, they showed great resilience and communication skills, as well as drawing laughs from the audience with their jokes about their family, the contrast between Ilfracombe and Dieppe, or indeed a journey to the moon and back – moon police included!

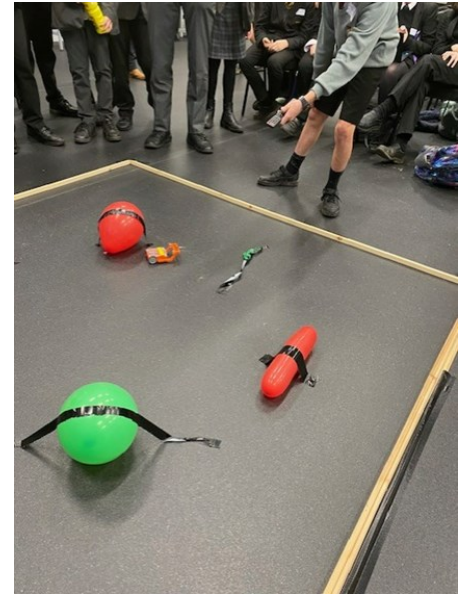
I'm sure I'm (almost) completely unbiased when I say they deserved prizes, so don't hesitate to give them your congratulations when you next see these superstars. Looking forward to next year's adventures!



Robot Challenge

Six of our finest Year 8 students have been busy plotting and coding their baby robots to compete in the IET Robot Challenge held at Petroc's technology department. These committed students have spent many lunchtimes working to create solutions to the various challenges set.

The event saw them go up against a number of teams from other local schools, the most fun being one where the robots were controlled by remote controls to burst balloons. They also had to create and present a solution to how robots could be used in the marine industry. Competition was tough, and we eventually placed fourth overall. However the challenge of working independently as a team to solve problems has been an invaluable learning experience and everyone involved have really enjoyed themselves. Well done and thank you to Jaydine, Mahi, Amelie, Iris, Zack, and Archie.



Rainbow Flag Award for LGBT+ inclusivity

Students and staff at Braunton Academy are very proud to have been awarded the Rainbow Flag Award in recognition of their progress towards LGBT+ inclusivity. Mrs Halpin, one of the teachers working on the Award, said "We are very proud of all the hard work that has gone into achieving this award. Staff, students, parents and governors have all participated, and we are thrilled that our Academy has been recognised as a place where everyone feels welcome and celebrated."

The award has guided the school through a rigorous process of self-evaluation. This has

PROUDLY ACHIEVED

resulted in changes to policy, the inclusion of relevant LGBT+ lesson

content, and posters encouraging the celebration of diversity. There is an active Gay-Straight Alliance Club which meets weekly to discuss issues affecting the LGBT+ community. Students are supported by staff who are trained and confident about discussing LGBT+ topics. This award is important to us as an Academy because we know that all our students benefit hugely from learning in a school community that is welcoming and open to all.



January 2024

'BookFace' Competition

Key Stage 3 students were invited to take part in the 'BookFace' competition run by the School Library Service in celebration of World Book Day (Thursday 7th March). The brief was to take a photo so that you are part of the book design, or to draw or paint a picture of your favourite book character and take a photo of it in front of your face.

We were delighted to hear that our very own Rosie (Year 7) won against all the other local schools with her wonderful and very creative submission featuring the book *Tyger* by S. F. Said.

Rosie won a book voucher and helped choose £100 worth of books for the school library. Well done, Rosie!



World Book Day Celebrations

As well as the 'BookFace' competition run by the School Library Service, we also ran a whole school treasure hunt across the week, where students had to find book characters hidden around the school site (there were 20 to find!). The students with the most correct answers were put into a draw to win a Waterstones voucher, with Hetty (Year 7) drawn as the winner!

Even staff got involved with the celebrations, once again putting Herculean effort into their World Book Day costumes. Maths and PE won the joint prize for best-dressed department with their *Mr Men* theme, and Mr Langmead won best individual costume dressed as an Atlas, but I think we can all agree that everyone looks fantastic!



Post-16 Transport and Vacant Seat Applications

If you are planning to study at your existing 6th form/FE colleges for Post-16 courses for the 2024/25 academic year, but have not yet completed a School Transport Vacant Seat application, then please follow the instructions set out below in bold. Please read the guidance notes on the webpage carefully and note that the application form can only be completed if there is no public service route that serves your school within 1.5 miles of your home address.

The Vacant Seat Application Form was sent home to Year 11 parents/carers via ParentMail on 22nd February. The deadline date for applications is Monday 1st July, however Transport Coordination Services will continue to accept applications beyond this date, but they should be submitted to us as soon as possible. Please read the leaflet and the webpage on the email and providing you meet the criteria, you can complete the online Vacant Seat Application Form.

Mainstream Transport Team, Transport Coordination Services

Macbeth

Six months of students' hard work in rehearsals was realised in a thrilling three-nights' performance of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. Students from every aspect of the Expressive Arts classes came together to create a performance beyond the expectations of what we thought the show could be when we started rehearsing in early September.

Clear, intelligent storytelling, atmospheric and compelling live music, visually stunning costume, and the commitment of students from Years 7 to 11 combined to create an experience that students will remember for years to come. I am sure Mr Helliwell will not forget the moment he was covered in stage blood while sitting in the front row - now that is an 'immersive' experience! Mr Carroll was especially proud of how the whole cast worked so hard to create a performance which was accessible to students and also managed to engage an adult audience to rediscover Shakespeare. As one student said to me after seeing the performance, "That was actually really good sir!" – no higher praise than that!

Reviews from the Braunton community were equally praise-worthy:

'For students, being part of productions like this can help to maintain a love of school, and education as a whole, as well as an impact on self-confidence and mental health and it is so important to have this available.'

'I have never seen such a powerful performance of Shakespeare by students! There were clearly hours and hours of work from so many staff. The music was wonderful, the costumes worked so well.'

'I used to be a Drama examiner and have seen many, many performances. This was in a league of its own...'

'..Fantastic acting! Move over Peaky Blinders...!'

'The best Shakespeare performance I've seen in any school'.

The Expressive Arts Department would like to thank all the local businesses who donated prizes for the raffle to raise funds for new lighting equipment for future productions, and the staff who gave such a huge amount of time and effort to enable such a valuable experience for our students.



Literature Workshop Ignites a Passion for Shakespearean Language!

Back in February, the English department were fortunate to have the magnificent Tom Davey visit Braunton Academy for the day. Tom, a Globe Theatre actor and English Literature practitioner, set up the Bright Torches company and travels around the UK and America working with both students and teachers.

Tom worked with each of the Year 9 English classes spending an hour involved in a variety of tasks. All of the tasks involved the students being on their feet and acting and reading lines from *Romeo and Juliet*. The students were encouraged to use both their voices and bodies to express themselves while they stood in the shoes of Juliet and her parents during the breakdown of their relationship. Students commented on the fun they'd experienced during the workshop and how it helped them to 'unlock' Shakespeare's message.

When school had finished that day, Tom worked with the English Department exploring a range of activities that they could use to facilitate knowledge of the text and enthusiasm. Like the students' workshops, they were always on their feet using their voice and bodies to throw themselves into the language. The whole day was a success and a passion for Shakespeare's language was definitely ignited.

Year 7 'Castles' Project

Students put their knowledge of castles from their unit on the Norman Invasion of England to good use by building motte and bailey and stone keep castles. Brilliant castles showcasing Norman defensive features were demonstrated beautifully in models made from wood, card, Lego, and even cake! Well done to all our students for showing their historical understanding using creative methods.



Westward Ho! Year 11 Fieldwork

The Year 11 geographers (76 of them!) were taken to Westward Ho! this term to investigate both coastal geography and the impact of tourism on the environment. We spent the day collecting information to help answer hypotheses such as 'Westward Ho! is effectively managed' and 'The environment declines as you move away from the coast'. The students worked exceptionally hard in some challenging weather and at times wet environments - those white trainers weren't so white when we returned! Well done to all Year 11. We hope that the data and findings will help when they use the information in their Paper 3 exam in June!



Pi Day Cake Competition

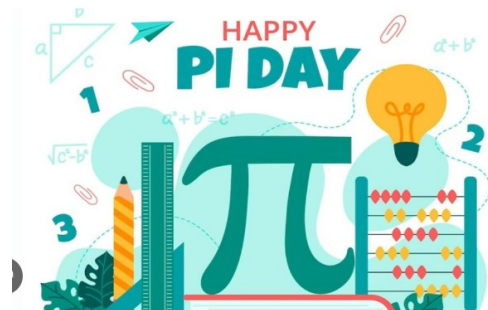
entrants



Cakes were judged on taste, texture & decoration. Thank you for the huge effort put in to create these amazing creations.

Congratulations to the following students for their inventive entries into the Pi Day Cake Competition:

- 1st place - Ethan
- 2nd place - Cara
- 3rd Place - Sienna
- Runner-up - Carys



UKMT Intermediate Challenge

Students in Years 9, 10 and 11 who are excelling in Maths took part in the UKMT Intermediate Challenge. This is a worldwide event and attracts students from all over the world, particularly the Far East. We achieved four gold awards which is only awarded to the top 8-9% of entries. A great achievement! Congratulations to Ryan - Best in School, Ollie - Best in Year (10), and to Zaiph and Sian. The junior event for Years 7 and 8 will take part at the end of April.

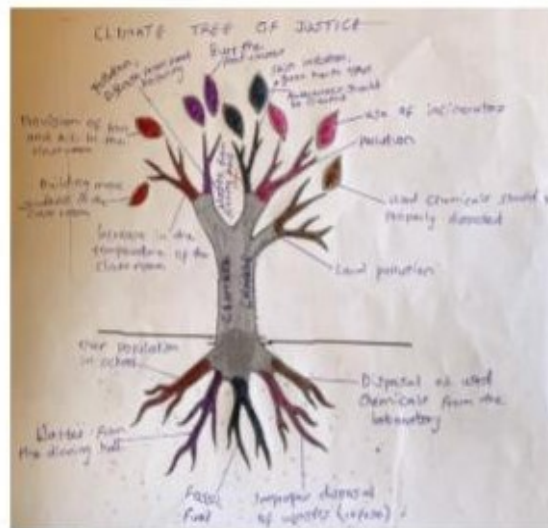
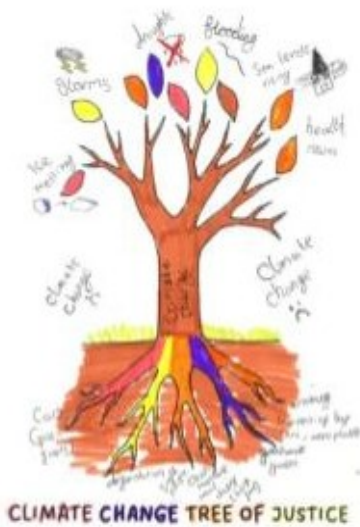
International Schools: Antarctica Flag Competition

Our students were encouraged to enter the Antarctica Flag competition run in conjunction with the Polar Network who engage with schools on environments across the polar regions of our world. This competition asks students to think about the environment of Antarctica and its ever-changing development. Students were required to submit a design for a flag that demonstrates qualities that the region promotes in their own way. We had some outstanding entries and our winning design chosen by the Polar Network was won by Clodagh in Year 7 whose flag was sent to Antarctica with a research scientist posted there, and she received an image and certificate showing her design in Antarctica. Well done all!



UK-Nigeria Partnership

As part of our recent partnership with our partner school in Nigeria, we have been exploring the issue of climate change and our understanding of its causes and impacts in our respective countries and locations. Many of our eco-group were asked to produce a climate tree of justice diagram that we shared with our Nigerian partners who then produced their own and sent to us. We were keen to see what similarities and differences there were in our understanding and impacts that climate change has in our different parts of the world.



Term Dates Reminder for 2023-24

Summer Term 2024

Term Starts	Monday 15th April 2024
Bank Holiday	Monday 6th May 2024
Half Term	Monday 27th May - Friday 31st May 2024
Term Ends	Wednesday 24th July 2024

GOLD FOR BRAUNTON ACADEMY



We are delighted to announce that we, Braunton Academy, have achieved the School Games Gold Mark Award for the 2022/23 academic year.

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

Our sporting achievements this year include:

56% of all students have accessed Braunton Academy PE and school sports enrichment clubs and competitions.

240 male students have accessed Braunton Academy PE and school sports enrichment clubs and competitions.

211 female students have accessed Braunton Academy PE and school sports enrichment clubs and competitions.

145/175 Year 7 students have accessed Braunton Academy PE and school sports enrichment clubs and competitions.

42% of all Pupil Premium students have accessed Braunton Academy PE and school sports enrichment clubs and competitions.

38% of all students with SEND have accessed Braunton Academy PE and school sports enrichment clubs and competitions.

With a total 299/798 young people competing in local inter-school competitions this year, we are extremely proud of our students for their dedication to all aspects of school sport, including those young volunteers, leaders and officials who made our competitions possible.

As part of our application, we were asked to fulfil criteria in the areas of participation, competition, workforce, and clubs, and we are pleased that the hard work of everyone at our school has been rewarded this year.

A special thanks to:

Braunton Academy PE staff

Braunton Academy staff coaching team

All Parent/Carer volunteer coaches

All students

We look forward to applying once again in 2024!



North Devon Indoor Athletics Champions

Congratulations to the Year 7 and 8 Indoor Athletics team who competed at the annual championships which were held at Bideford College.

The team were absolutely superb throughout the day, which included winning 8 out of 8 relay races, and being crowned North Devon Champions once again! What a fantastic achievement.



Devon Schools' Gymnastics

Congratulations to the Year 7 and 8 Girls' teams who competed in the Devon Schools' Gymnastics Competition - the U13 novice team won gold!



North Devon Netball, Year 7

A fantastic first netball season for the Year 7 girls who won the Schools' League, and came 2nd and 3rd in the North Devon Tournament. Everyone has shown great commitment and dedication to training, and have made great developments in their game throughout the year.



North Devon Netball, Year 10

The Year 10 netball team came 4th at the North Devon Tournament. They worked hard and demonstrated a great team performance, winning matches against Shebbear, Kingsley, Park, and Chulmleigh.



YOUTH
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GOLD

QUALITY MARK

Awarded to
Braunton Academy

Trip to Team Bath Netball

The netball girls enjoyed the amazing Team Bath play in the netball super league. A fantastic game to watch, with a great group of students. We even got to meet Jess Thrilby, England Netball Head Coach.



U13 Girls' Football

Our young team won the North Devon Tournament and qualified for the Devon Tournament in Newton Abbott. They played really well and they finished 5th overall.



Year 7 Rugby

The Year 7 rugby team had a great first season, showing great attitude and commitment during both training and matches. They finished their season unbeaten after an outstanding final game against Park School. Well done boys!



Volleyball Success



North Devon KS3 Indoor Volleyball winners.



North Devon KS4 Indoor Volleyball winners.

Student Celebrations

Congratulations to the **U13 gymnastics teams** who competed at Kingsley school: Novice team – gold; Intermediate team – silver.

Congrats again to **all our swimmers** with a massive medal haul after competing in Plymouth.

Massive congrats to Issi who last week represented **England U16 Lionesses** in Turkey. She played all three games, captained the team vs Ecuador, scored, and then received Player of the Match vs Norway.

Charlie played for **Exeter Chiefs** against Bristol U16s.

Year 7 netballers were crowned North Devon School League champions with 100% record.

Surfing News

Huge congratulations to four of our students who have been selected for the Surfing England Junior Squad: Reuben, Annie, Joel, and Jack. We look forward to hearing about their successes this summer!



**SURFING
ENGLAND**

Area Eventing Success

Daniel is now registered and will be representing Braunton Academy at King's Sedgmoor Equestrian Centre where he will compete in an Arena Eventing qualifier for the National School's Championships in May.

A bit of info if you don't already know: Arena Eventing is a mix of show-jump and cross-country fences, usually around 18 fences all together; this must be done in an optimum time - the closest to that optimum time will qualify. Not easy as Dan's pony loves it and is quite quick!



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VACANCY FOR EXAM INVIGILATORS

We are looking to appoint a team of enthusiastic and flexible individuals to act as Exam Invigilators. Although the role is mostly seasonal during the summer, exams run throughout the year, providing ongoing opportunities for temporary employment.

**Please note, the summer exams begin on
Thursday 9th May 2024 and end on Wednesday 19th June 2024.**

Ideally candidates will need to be able to commit to several hours a week throughout the summer season. However, please specify on the application form any dates that you are not available.

Full training will be provided in preparation for the next set of exams.

Pay scale: **J.E. Grade B3 - £11.79 per hour**

For further details, please search under the 'Work With Us' section of the Academy website www.braunton.academy and fill out an application form and send back to recruitment@braunton.academy

Please note, we do not accept CVs

Safeguarding: Braunton Academy is committed to safeguarding the welfare of its students, therefore an online check of publicly available information will be completed to assess shortlisted candidates' suitability to work with children. The successful applicant will also be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) and full identity and qualification checks. Please refer to the Child Protection Policy on our Academy website <https://www.braunton.academy/policies>