

Parents' Post



BRAUNTON ACADEMY
ASPIRE & ACHIEVE

www.braunton.academy

Summer 1 2026

Thoughts from the Principal's Office

Dear families,

We hope you and your children have enjoyed this half term at Braunton Academy, as the days are longer and the weather has improved the school has moved towards its summer calendar of events. Athletics and rounders competitions are in full swing, the Music department are already preparing for the summer concert, and the Drama department are working towards next year's whole-school performance of Matilda. This week Year 10 are taking part in their work experience week, and we look forward to sharing their experiences in the next edition.

This half term we are saying 'goodbye' to a couple of support staff that have been working with us for some time. Mr Finnamore our senior Science Technician is leaving us, along with Mrs Hart who has had a dual role as Pastoral Support for Year 7 and responsibility for overseeing additional support for our students whose parents are in the armed forces. Both colleagues have been incredible at supporting the staff and students while being employed at the Academy and we wish them both well in the future. Mrs Logan will be taking over responsibility for Year 7 pastoral support and Mrs Ong will be taking over the role of supporting forces' children. They will write to parents in the coming weeks to formally introduce themselves.

Best wishes,
Ms Bowler



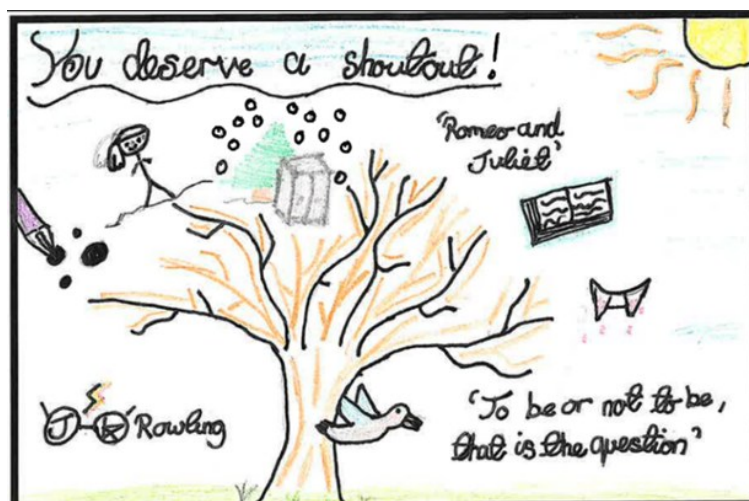
Eco Club students celebrating Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday

Winner of the English Department Postcard Design Competition

Florence (Y7) has won our English Department Postcard Competition this term and her design has been printed as our department postcard. It will be given to students who have done spectacular work in English lessons and upheld our school values. Great work Florence!



We will be running the competition again next year to find the next design.



Plouescat Twinning visit

This half term two of our Year 10 students, Millie and Jaydine, represented the Academy and the wider Braunton community by participating in the bi-annual visit to Plouescat as part of the Braunton Twinning celebrations. They had wonderful excursions to Morlaix to see the former tobacco factory, which is now a museum; to a hidden tea plantation where they now produce one of the finest teas in the world; and to the Chateau de Taureau - a fortified island built in the 17th century. The Braunton Community were honoured with the naming of a square, 'Place Braunton', and the planting of a Gingko Biloba tree in the town to celebrate the enduring friendship between our two communities. At the formal celebrations on the last night Millie and Jaydene made formal speeches in French to over 60 guests.

Next year Braunton will be hosting the delegation from Plouescat; we have had a request from the Twinning Association for families to get involved in next year's celebrations in Braunton. If you are interested in supporting this event, please contact brauntontwinning75@gmail.com



Root Cause Project

Students have been taking part in the Root Cause Project, a veteran-led series of outdoor bushcraft and survival sessions hosted at school. The programme, part of a wider initiative in North Devon, uses woodland-based activities and guided nature experiences to build resilience, teamwork, wellbeing, and personal growth in young people. Across the ongoing sessions, students are learning practical skills from fire-craft and shelter-building to tasting foraged foods and cooking, while also engaging in meaningful group reflection and supportive discussion. This blend of hands-on challenges and conversation helps foster confidence, mental wellbeing, and communication skills in a calm, natural setting. As the Root Cause Project continues to unfold, it's already proving to be a transformative experience nurturing the personal development of our military children.



UK-Ukraine Schools Partnership

We are delighted to share that our school has been selected to take part in the UK-Ukraine School Partnerships Programme - a unique, government-funded initiative that connects schools in the UK with partner schools in Ukraine. This programme is part of a long-term commitment by both countries to strengthen relationships and promote understanding between young people.

Over the coming year our students will work with children in a Ukrainian partner school through a series of activities centred on reading for pleasure. By sharing stories, books, and ideas, students will not only develop their literacy skills but also gain a deeper understanding of another culture, broadening their global awareness. This partnership has been designed to build confidence, empathy and curiosity, while also supporting reading enjoyment and mental wellbeing.

The programme is about more than a single project. It aims to create a long-term, meaningful relationship between our school

and our partner school. Through regular communication and shared experiences, students will develop a real sense of connection and friendship with young people in another country.

Thank you to Mr Barfield for his work on achieving this partnership opportunity. We are incredibly proud to be part of this initiative and look forward to the positive impact it will have on our students, helping them become confident readers, thoughtful global citizens, and empathetic individuals.



Spring Success in Creative Writing!

Creative Writing Club has become a celebrated part of our Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday lunchtimes at Braunton and we're really proud of our student successes in many competitions over the last term.

We have stormed Young Writers competitions recently. Hetty, Sylvia, Coco, Clodagh (Y9), Amelie and Daisy (Y7) are in 'Ghost Stories' and Amelie is also printed in 'I have a Dream'. As well as this, Shore (Y8) has been printed in 'Stranger Sagas' and we have students pending for an additional poetry anthology and flash fiction series coming very soon.



As well as this, we have entered our first international competition! Chloe (Y11, Georgia (Y7), Bianca (Y9) and Florence (Y7) entered the Never Such Innocence 'In Someone Else's Shoes' writing competition where students were tasked with writing from the perspective of those impacted by war and challenged to use their empathy skills. They could write a poem or even create a piece of art. We didn't place this time round but we did receive some lovely certificates for our participation and the girls all did a fantastic job. We're looking forward to trying again next year. We have also had our first Highly Commended entry to The Tacchi Morris Arts Centre from Flo (Y9) - huge congratulations!

Florence (Y7) has been our most prolific competition entrant this year, entering the Author of Tomorrow adventure fiction competition, the Canterbury Tales competition and Never Such Innocence. She also won our English Department postcard design competition. She's always working on something and we're amazed at her imagination! We're awaiting news on her latest entries.

Finally, two of our students reached the regional category of the Rotary Club Young Writer competition, Bea (Y7) and Chloe (Y11).

Chloe (Y11) was awarded two certificates and prizes for her entry to the Rotary Young Writer 2026 competition. She has also been invited to the celebration event in June. She did incredibly well - winning the regional level for the senior category before winning the District level - which covers areas of Devon, Dorset and Somerset. She has now gone on to the national level of the competition. All students who entered will receive a certificate for their participation. Huge thanks go to the Braunton Rotary Club for judging our entries to the competition and coming in to present certificates and prizes. We look forward to entering again next year!



Moving forward, this term sees us launch our illustration competition where students have the challenge of creating a 12-page picture book, hand illustrated and including text, on the theme of nature/faeries/fantasy. We're delighted to have had contact with a local illustrator, Joseph Witchall, who has agreed to judge our competition and has offered a prize as well. Entry deadline is Friday 3rd July. Please see Miss Reed for further details.

**Creative Writing Club: Tuesday after school,
Wednesday lunchtime in Rm 66.**



Some creative writing successes this week:

Shore's (Y8) 100-word, flash-fiction piece has been printed in Stranger Sagas, our third instalment of Young Writer books. She had to write about a strange event but was only allowed 100 words to do so. She had to use foreshadowing and end on a cliffhanger. The three books will go into the library.

Flo (Y9) has received a certificate for her 'Highly Commended' creative piece, 'Blue', that was submitted to 'The Page is Printed' for the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre in Taunton.



Aspire Trip

We visited Bideford College we were told about their sixth form and the opportunities they offer for students. Representatives from Exeter University ran the day alongside several students who are currently studying various courses. They talked about their experiences and got our students to engage in activities linked to thinking about further education. This included getting them to consider what they enjoy, are good at/interested in, and what jobs would need what skills and the school subjects they are most engaged in. The students then explored what routes they could go down to achieve their career goals. They answered students' questions about university life.



Devon Cup Winners

Both our u13 and u15 girls football teams were crowned Devon Champions after travelling to Newton Abbott to play Exmouth and Isca in the final. The girls have been outstanding all season and to be crowned the best team in Devon is a fantastic achievement. A special mention goes out to Year 7 student Ava R who was awarded Player of the Match. A massive well done girls!



Ten Tors - Year 10

Zack and Mahi, successfully completed Ten Tors for the second year in a row. This year, their team from the Devon Army Cadets took on the 45 mile course. They came in well ahead of schedule, clocking the second fastest time for their route. A superb effort!

Hugo, Violet and Zach successfully completed the 35 mile Ten Tors route as part of the Taw Explorers team last weekend. This was the first time that they had taken on a Ten Tors challenge and they were absolutely incredible, working together with each other and their other three team members to cross the line proudly as a team of six.



Exmoor Challenge

The team had a fantastic day completing the Exmoor Challenge. They started the day in beautiful sunshine and finished in torrential rain. 124 teams took part, covering 16 miles, with eight timed checkpoints and a quiz to complete along the way.



North Devon Hospice Nightwalk

Well done to Mrs Hookes, Mrs Haines, Miss Found, Mrs Emburey, and Mrs Nolan who completed the Nightwalk, walking 10.9 miles from Bideford to Barnstaple.



Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award - Practice Walks



European Festival of Rugby

Seven Braunton students represented Barnstaple u14s over Easter.

The team played in the European Festival of Rugby and won! The festival brings together 60 teams from across Europe and has been running for 25 years. They played teams from Holland, Latvia and the UK. In addition to this, the boys also went on to win the Devon County U14's Cup, once again representing Barnstaple Rugby Club and the Academy.



ND Schools Showjumping

We had the 3rd round of the school's showjumping league. Sienna M and Isla W both competed individually representing the Academy. Isla came 3rd in the 70cm height and Sienna came 1st. Sienna also came 1st in the 80cm.

A great day for both riders, one more round to go before the championships in July.



Plymouth Argyle U13s

Year 7 student Harry represented Plymouth Argyle u13s at the weekend in the EFL Cat 2/3 national cup finals which were held in Tottenham. It was the first time Plymouth have made the finals and they managed to win beating over 50 teams to the title including Cardiff, Stockport and Barnsley. Well done Harry!



Swimming News

Five swimmers qualified for the Swim England South West Regional Championships. To even qualify for this event puts them in the Top 13.8% of competitive swimmers in the region across six counties. The swimmers have spent the last three weekends competing at Millfield (younger age groups) and Hengrove (older age groups).

Joe C (Year 10 - Competition Age 15): 50m freestyle - 6th.

Shore E (Year 8 - Competition Age 13): 200m fly - 16th, 100m fly - 23rd, 50m fly - 52nd.

Oliver M (Year 7 - Competition Age 13): 200 freestyle - 28th, 100m Breaststroke - 11th, 200m breaststroke - 5th, 50m breaststroke - 19th, 400m freestyle - 18th.

Hamish D (Year 7 - Competition Age 12): 100m backstroke 10th, 100m breaststroke 3rd, 200m breaststroke 5th, 50m breaststroke 4th, 200m IM 11th, 50m backstroke 15th.

Arthur W (Year 7 - Competition Age 12): 100m backstroke 23rd, 50m backstroke 24th.

Why Attendance Matters

Academic Achievement: Students with high attendance rates generally achieve better grades and perform well in exams.

Social Development: Attending school regularly helps students build and maintain friendships, develop social skills, and participate in extra-curricular activities.

Consistency and Routine: Establishing a routine of regular attendance helps students develop good habits that will benefit them throughout their lives. It teaches them responsibility, punctuality, and the importance of commitment.

Support and Resources: Being in school ensures that students have access to the support and resources they need, including teachers, counsellors, and learning materials. This support is crucial for their academic and emotional well-being.

Reporting Absences: To report a student late or absent, please notify us by 8.45 am via the ParentMail app.



Missing school... missing out!

Don't let your child be the one to miss out!

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent number of missed:		
	Days	Weeks	Average lessons
95%	9	2	54
90%	19	4	114
85%	29	6	174
80%	38	8	228
75%	48	10	288
70%	57	11.5	342
65%	67	13.5	402

“We are only a few minutes late” - Does it matter?

Being late for school reduces learning time and does not prepare your child or young person for their future working lives.

- Arrival 5 minutes late every day = 3 days of learning missed each year
- Arrival 15 minutes late every day = 10 days or 2 weeks of learning each year.