

Parents' Post

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Summer 2 2026

Thoughts from the Principal's Office

Dear Families,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the final edition of this year's Parents' Post. It has been another fantastic year at the Academy, and we are very proud of the academic and enrichment achievements students continue to engage in at school and in their free time. With the sun having shone so much over the past couple of months it has been the perfect opportunity to get students out and about on enrichment activities; enrichment is very important in developing students' character and the wider social skills needed throughout their lives. We know that families play a large part in supporting these opportunities, and we thank you for your continued support. I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and share in the celebrations of our students and staff.

Best wishes, Mrs Bowler, Principal



Students completed the Duke of Edinburgh
Bronze Award

Farewells to Staff

We're saying goodbye to Teaching Assistant **Mrs Sherborne**, who has been such a wonderful part of the SEND team this year. We'll all miss her calm, steady presence, her thoughtful way of lifting up some of our most struggling learners, and a genuine kindness that is felt by staff and students alike. We're wishing her all the happiness as she gets ready to welcome her baby boy in September. **Mrs Coles, Miss Found and Miss Reed** will also be moving on to new challenges.

We also say goodbye to **Mr MacKenzie**, who is moving on from his role as Cover Supervisor. Throughout Mr MacKenzie's time with us, he has been a valued member of staff, known for his fantastic sense of humour, caring nature and ability to build positive relationships with students. He has brought laughter, encouragement and support to many students and colleagues alike. We are grateful for everything he has contributed to our school and know he will be missed by staff and students. We wish him all the very best for the future. **Mr May** has completed his apprenticeship in the PE Department and will be much missed.

International Schools News: Amigos Vocational Centre, Uganda

As a school, we are sponsoring Henry Oryem, a disadvantaged young person from Uganda, to spend a year studying at Kira Farm, the Amigos Vocational Centre near Kampala. The programme equips young people with practical skills such as tailoring, construction, agriculture, health awareness and sustainable living. Alongside vocational training, students develop leadership, confidence and personal resilience. After completing the course, they return to their communities with the skills needed to start a trade, earn a living and share their knowledge with others, helping to create lasting positive change.

One of the real joys of our partnership with Amigos Vocational Centre is hearing how our sponsored trainees are growing and developing. Henry has recently written to share his experiences as he begins his second semester. Alongside practical training, Henry is learning about the importance of good health, leadership, teamwork and faith. He is especially proud of how his confidence has grown, from feeling nervous when he first arrived to now speaking publicly and helping to lead daily devotions. Henry's letter reflects the positive impact of the programme, as young people gain valuable life skills, deepen their faith and build brighter futures for themselves and their communities.

While we are not able to visit regularly, we remain in touch through letters and updates, allowing us to



follow Henry's progress and celebrate his achievements. His recent letter is a reminder of the difference that encouragement, education and opportunity can make. We look forward to continuing our support and sharing more of Henry's journey with our school community in the months ahead.

Year 10 Work Experience Week

This year again saw our Year 10 students head out to the world of work and complete some aspirational Work Experience placements. Students experienced a wide range of careers in a range of industries. Thank you to the large numbers of local employers who took our students in and gave them a great learning experience. Students visited employers across the country and internationally. Students being able to link their learning in school to future careers is important in their maturing into young adults of the future.



Geography Fieldtrip

Over two fantastic days, more than 100 Year 11 Geography students visited Westward Ho! to carry out the fieldwork that will form an important part of their preparation for GCSE examinations in 2027.

The trip provided students with the opportunity to investigate both physical and human geography in a real-world setting. Along the coastline, students explored the ways in which Westward Ho! is protected from coastal erosion, examining sea defences and considering the challenges of managing a dynamic coastal environment. Moving inland, students collected data to investigate how land use, environmental quality and human activity change as you move away from the coast.

The quality of students' engagement throughout the visit was outstanding. They approached data collection with enthusiasm, asked thoughtful questions and showed genuine curiosity about the landscapes they were studying. Staff were particularly impressed by the maturity, excellent behaviour and positive attitude displayed by all involved. The pebble towers produced during our morning break were excellent evidence of how cross-curricular the trip was! They were a real credit to the school.

Fieldwork plays a vital role in GCSE Geography, helping students to develop the enquiry skills needed for Paper 3 and giving them first-hand experiences that they can draw upon in their examinations. The data and observations gathered during these two days will prove invaluable when students begin preparing for their final assessments.

A huge thank you to all the students for their enthusiasm and professionalism. It was a pleasure to spend two days with such a positive group, and we look forward to seeing them put their fieldwork experiences to good use in the classroom over the coming months.



Trip to Barcelona

A group of our Year 8 and 9 students embarked on an exciting Modern Foreign Languages trip to the vibrant city of Barcelona. The visit provided a fantastic opportunity for students to immerse themselves in Spanish culture while putting their language skills into practice in real-life situations.

During their stay, students enjoyed a packed itinerary of some of Barcelona's most famous attractions. Highlights included a scenic cable car ride offering breathtaking views of the city, a traditional tapas tour where students sampled authentic Spanish cuisine, and a visit to the iconic Sagrada Familia, one of the world's most remarkable architectural landmarks. The group also explored Barcelona Aquarium, home to a fascinating variety of marine life, and visited Camp Nou, the world-famous home of FC Barcelona.

As well as being an unforgettable cultural and social experience, the trip offered significant educational benefits. Previous Modern Foreign Languages visits have consistently shown that students make rapid progress when they spend time in a country where the language is spoken. Opportunities to listen to native speakers and communicate in everyday situations help to develop confidence, improve pronunciation and enhance both listening and speaking skills.

The visit was particularly valuable for our Year 8 students, as Barcelona is one of the key topics studied within the curriculum. Seeing first-hand many of the landmarks and monuments they have learned about in class brought their studies to life and helped deepen their understanding of the city, its history and its culture.

Throughout the trip, students represented the school brilliantly, embracing every opportunity to learn, explore and experience life in Spain. The memories made, friendships strengthened and language skills developed will undoubtedly remain with them for many years to come.

Everyone had an amazing time, and we look forward to offering more opportunities like this in the future.



Published Poetry

Freddie became very passionate about writing war poetry before he left this summer and, in particular, was inspired by the First World War poet Wilfred Owen. He wrote a fabulous poem commemorating Owen that was printed in the EX33 magazine last term.

We laminated a copy for him and at the end of June he took the copy to place on Owen's grave in Ors, France. He said: "Me and my Mum drove to commemorate Wilfred Owen at his grave in Ors (a really small village in the French countryside). I laid my poem on his grave - I do sometimes wonder if he'd appreciate a gesture like that."



Illustrator Workshop

As a reward for their hard work, we were excited to offer selected students the opportunity to attend the Illustration Workshop with Joseph Witchall.

They have been chosen due to their progress in Art and English lessons.

House Competition- Welly Wanging

Zack 10KH with a throw of 28m **Woolacombe** House!

And Cara 10PM for the girls with a throw of 16m taking the girls win for **Putsborough!**



Year 11 Leavers' Prom

On Friday 26 June we celebrated with our Class of 2026 at the Year 11 Leavers' Prom at the Barnstaple Hotel. The evening provided an amazing opportunity to recognise all the achievements of our students over the last five years. Many parents, friends and relatives came to watch students arrive and take photos.

134 students arrived in style in tractors, classic cars, jeeps, motor bikes and various other modes of transport. Students were dressed in their finery and had a lovely two-course carvery. They were entertained by Mentality, our Year 11 student band. They also took part in a Traitors/Murder Mystery event during the evening trying to identify which character had murdered Jay Gatsby. It turned out to be Dr Black the Doctor aka Ms Gibbins. The evening continued with a disco.

The Year 11s raised over £730 towards the event in fundraising during 2025/26 so many thanks to those of you who helped contribute - making cakes and buying raffle tickets. In addition, some parents were able to gift a total of £260, towards tickets for students who might not otherwise have been able to afford to attend.

Mr Ovey, Head of Year 11 said: "It was a great evening and lots of lovely memories were made. We will all miss seeing them each day in school, but we wish the whole year group well in the next phases of their education."

More photos are on the Academy website



Year 11 Exams

We are incredibly proud of our Year 11 students and the commitment they have shown throughout their GCSEs this year. They approached their exams with maturity, focus, and determination, taking the process seriously from start to finish. The hard work they have put in—both in lessons and through their independent revision—has been outstanding, and they have truly risen to the challenge. They should feel very proud of everything they have achieved.

It has also been fantastic to see such a positive attitude towards assessments across the school. Our Year 10 students have made an excellent start to their GCSE journey, approaching their mock examinations with real intent and demonstrating the habits and resilience needed for next year.

Equally, our younger students have impressed us. Year 7 and Year 8 students have shown great effort and ambition in their assessments, establishing strong foundations for the years ahead. Their willingness to engage, revise, and challenge themselves is a testament to the positive culture we are building together.

All of these experiences are vital in preparing students for future success. With further mock examinations planned for November and March with Year 11, students will continue to build confidence, refine their exam skills, and develop the resilience needed for the real GCSEs.

As our Exam Invigilation Team commented:

"The calm, focused approach we've seen from students across all year groups shows how valuable these experiences are. Each mock exam helps students become more confident, more organised, and fully prepared for the demands of the real GCSEs. Our job is to coach and support them through it. It really is a team effort."

Well done to all our students—we are very proud of your efforts and achievements. Mr Twohig, Vice Principal



Record-Breaking Success in the UKMT Mathematics Challenge

Students at Braunton Academy have achieved their best-ever results in the **UK Mathematics Trust (UKMT) Mathematical Challenges**, making this a truly outstanding year for mathematics across the school.

The **UKMT (United Kingdom Mathematics Trust)** is a national charity dedicated to advancing the education of young people in mathematics. It is renowned for organising prestigious mathematical problem-solving competitions that attract hundreds of thousands of entries from students across the UK each year.

At Braunton Academy, the competition is organised by Mr England from the Mathematics Department, who encourages students of all abilities to take part and develop their problem-solving skills.

This year, a remarkable **120 students** from across all five year groups entered the competition – the highest level of participation and success the school has ever seen. Students achieved an impressive total of:

16 Gold Certificates

25 Silver Certificates

40 Bronze Certificates

These results represent an exceptional achievement and reflect both the hard work of our students and the growing strength of mathematics throughout the school.

The success did not stop there. An outstanding **12 students** performed so well in the initial round that they received invitations to participate in the next stage of the competition, a prestigious follow-on round open only to the highest-achieving students.

In this invitational round, Braunton Academy students continued to excel, earning a further:

3 Gold Certificates

3 Silver Certificates

2 Bronze Certificates

These achievements highlight the increasing depth of mathematical talent within the school. Year after year, standards continue to rise, with students showing greater enthusiasm and confidence in tackling challenging mathematical problems.

Congratulations to all students who took part and represented Braunton Academy so well. Their dedication, resilience and passion for mathematics have made this a record-breaking year. With such impressive results and growing interest in the competition, students are already looking forward to next year's challenges and aiming for even greater success.

Mr P England, Teacher of Mathematics



Duke of Edinburgh – Bronze Award

This year we had 38 students begin the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Students had to complete four challenges: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and an Expedition. Students have made some fantastic contributions to the local community with their volunteering at sports clubs, primary schools, care homes, charity shops, Scouts and Guides, conservation groups, youth clubs, athletic events and many other events. Students' physical challenges have included improving their physical abilities in rugby, gym, golf, dance, running, netball, gymnastics, surfing, swimming, football, cheerleading and many other sports. Students have improved their skills in a variety of areas including cooking, shooting, musical instruments, painting, modelling, sign language, photography, singing, bell ringing and building a shed.

During the year students prepared for their overnight expedition. This included learning about first aid, map reading, camping skills and cooking skills. Students completed a practice expedition and then all successfully completed their qualifying expedition.

Thank you to Simon Jones and Stuart Bell for training and guiding students with their expeditions. Thank you to Mrs Couch, Mrs Haines and Mrs Woodhead for supporting students with their weekend expeditions.

We look forward to many of next year's year 9 students completing their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award and our current Bronze award students moving onto the Silver Award.



Year 6 Transition Days

Students had a great time experiencing a wide range of activities on our Transition Days. We look forward to meeting you all again in September!



Eco Club News

Braunton Academy Eco Club had a lovely end of year visit to the Braunton Countryside Centre for a talk about local flora and fauna from Mary Breeds - one of the expert volunteers there.

We learned about the importance of our local biosphere, and in particular how important grasses are to so many insects.

Next, we plan to find a space at school, encourage native grasses to flourish and so improve our school's biodiversity.



Braunton Academy Alumni Success

Apprentice of the Year James Dorling of TDK Lambda has completed his Level 3 Engineering Fitter apprenticeship. James achieved an overall distinction grade for his college course and Apprenticeship Standard and has now moved on to study for an HNC in Engineering. Excellent work James – we're very proud of you.



Amélie Woodley signed the lease on her new café, called From, Amélie, and is inspired by cafés Amélie visited while travelling in South East Asia after finishing her A-levels.

Amélie said: "It's like a mixture of all my experiences in one place. I've always wanted to own a café. If you asked any of my friends, they'd tell you that's what I've always wanted to do. I just never thought I'd actually be able to do it."

Although becoming a business owner at just 21 has been daunting at times, she says the support of friends, family and the Braunton community has made all the difference.



Summer Term Fun

Some of our Design & Technology students have been doing a little extra task as they had completed all required work a bit ahead of schedule. The challenge was to design and make a working boomerang. They put into practice all of their traditional hand-making skills to create the tapered wings accurately to suit a left- or right-handed thrower, learnt all about how basic aerodynamics works and then took inspiration from traditional aboriginal painting to decorate their boomerangs in a style fitting of the task – using no brushes, just sticks! The results have been amazing visually, but the true test was when we took them out to Tweedies' field to test them in flight. An engaging learning opportunity and also one that has extended their learning beyond what they normally do. Well done Year 9s!



Sports Day 2026

Another year of outstanding participation levels and sporting performance. A massive thank you to all parents and supporters who came along to watch! A big thank you to those parents who laced up their trainers and competed in a race!

Results were as follows:

1. Croyde
2. Putsborough
3. Woolacombe
4. Saunton

Records which were broken this year:

Year 8:

Kush B - 1500m = 4m45s

Year 9:

Sonny D - High Jump = 1.71m

Emilia C - Shot = 9.15m

Year 10:

Quentin S - 100m = 11.2s & 200m = 22.4s

Ashton R - 800m = 2m07s

Dylan T - High Jump = 1.80m

Amelie B - 100m = 12.35s



Photos are all on our Instagram page: [brauntonacademy](#)

Junior Lifeguard Days

80 students had the opportunity to learn lifeguarding skills at Putsborough Beach with the Nick Thorn Surf School.



The final round of the school's equestrian championship took place, with some fantastic results for the Academy riders.

Sienna M reigned champion in both the 70cm and the 80cm, taking 1st place in both classes

Isla W also placed in the championship taking 6th place in the 70cm and 3rd place in the 80cm

A great representation for the Academy equestrian team, a fantastic achievement.

This is the girls' final year riding for the Academy, hopefully we will see more riders next year to make another amazing equestrian team!



Well done to our volleyball teams who travelled to Croyde to play in the North Devon beach volleyball tournament, one of our teams managed to place 3rd overall which is brilliant!

Luan in Year 10 was asked to play up an age group for Devon U16 v Gloucestershire U16s in Cheltenham. He took 6 wickets (6/47), a brilliant achievement



Well done to our Year 9 and 10 girls' and boys' athletics teams who were crowned North Devon Champions.

The teams also came 3rd in the South West Schools track and field cup.

Also huge congratulations to year 10 and 11 students:
Amelie B, Quentin S, Maddie DH



Our girls have been busy this term taking on North Devon schools in the rounders league. Our final placings were as follows:
Year 7 - 3rd - Year 8 - 1s - Year 9 - 1st - Year 10 – 2nd Well done girls!



Braunton enjoyed another successful athletics season this year! The results were as follows:
North Devon League Champions
Year 9 Girls, Year 10 Girls, and Year 10 Boys
North Devon Athletics Championship winners



English Schools track and field cup
Inter boys and girls achieved 3rd place finishes across the South West

A huge well done to all our athletes who have competed and represented us this season!

Our Year 7 cricket teams travelled to Park school for the North Devon tournament. We came away with a 1st and 6th place! Well done boys



Five swimmers from Braunton Academy 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: Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Dorset). The swimmers spent the 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.



Congratulations to the volleyball players who came 3rd at the beach volleyball competition



Well done to Amélie B who competed for Bath ADC Exeter. Not only did the Exeter hub win the whole netball tournament but Amélie won the award for Most Improved Player. Well done Amélie, we are super proud.

It's been a really successful time for our Braunton Academy surfers who have been competing in numerous national competitions recently. In particular, massive congratulations need to go to Annie Nicholls and Jack Strutt.

Jack has qualified to represent England U16 Boys at ISA world junior surfing championships in El Salvador later this year.



Annie finished third in the U16 girls English Nationals at Fistril, Newquay



English Schools Championship Performers
Over the weekend 3 of our students travelled to Birmingham to compete in the English Schools Championships where they represented Devon in their disciplines. Some amazing results saw....

Amelie B - Finished 6th in the 300m final running against girls older than her! This now makes her the 6th fastest 300m girl at Inter level.

Quentin S - Finished 4th in his 200m heat unfortunately missing out on the final however he was later crowned national champion in the 4 X 100m relay

A massive congratulations to both students who competed against the best athletes in the country!

Introducing our new rugby team wear for 2026 onwards. Thank-you to [@vx3apparel](#) and also our sponsor [@jollytales1](#) for kindly supporting our teams this year.



Introducing our 2026 Sports Personality of the Year Nominees

- Amélie B - Netball and Athletics
- Danny L - Football
- Annie N - Surfing
- Charlotte B - Boxing
- Quentin S - Athletics
- Henry S – Wakeboarding

And the winner is..... Amélie!



Term Dates 2026/27

Autumn Term 2026

Term Starts	Monday 7th September 2026
Half Term	Monday 26th - Friday 30th October 2026
Occasional Day	Friday 27th November 2026
Term Ends	Friday 18th December 2026

Spring Term 2027

Term Starts	Tuesday 5th January 2027
Half Term	Monday 15th - Friday 19th February 2027
Term Ends	Thursday 25th March 2027

Summer Term 2027

Term Starts	Monday 12th April 2027
Bank Holiday	Monday 3rd May 2027
Half Term	Monday 31st May - Friday 4th June 2027
Term Ends	Thursday 22nd July 2027

Term Dates 2027/28

Autumn Term 2027

Term Starts	Monday 6th September 2027
Half Term	Monday 25th - Friday 29th October 2027
Occasional Day	Friday 26th November 2027
Term Ends	Wednesday 22nd December 2027

All our term dates are on the website. If you are booking a holiday, please be aware that primary school holiday dates may vary slightly from ours.

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.