



January 2026

THE EAGLE

Message from the Headteacher

I hope you all had an enjoyable festive break. Students have made an excellent start to 2026, settling back into the familiar routines and expectations of The Gilbert School.

The dark, cold month of January can be rather bleak after the excitement of Christmas, yet it is uplifting to see the continued positivity of our staff and students; with the school production rehearsals in full swing, PE fixtures taking place, the CCF meeting each week, to name but a few of the extensive co-curricular opportunities taking place across the school each week.

In addition, there are regular opportunities for Year 11 students to attend revision sessions after school or during lunchtimes, the details of which have been emailed to Year 11 Parents/Carers and Year 11 Gilbertdians.

We are fortunate to have a well-equipped library, staffed by our superb librarian, Mrs Jenkins. Many of our students utilise this provision on a regular basis, enhancing their reading proficiency and wider knowledge through the books they read, yet like most schools, we would like more students to read regularly for pleasure. 2026 is the National Year of Reading, an initiative spearheaded by the Department of Education and the National Literacy Trust. There will be many exciting additional reading opportunities and challenges for your child in the months ahead. The campaign asks the nation to "go all in" on their passions and interests for 2026 and discover how reading can unlock the things they already love – be that music, football, sports, baking, family-time or sci-fi.

There have been several co-curricular events and trips, which you can read about below. You may also wish to check the co-curricular offer which has been updated for this term.

Please do also visit the Gilbert Facebook page to read more about the positive achievements of our students, including the many sporting fixtures that take place.

Mr J Mitchell
Headteacher

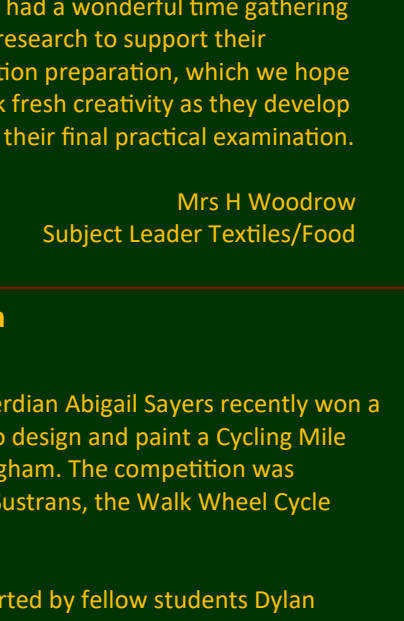
VEX Robotics Competition

On 16th January, six students from Year 10 took part in the VEX V5 Robotics competition in the prestigious surroundings of Charterhouse School.

Whilst our Gilbertdians did not win the competition, their teamwork, enthusiasm and problem solving skills were excellent.

Very well done to Melih Yucel, Rihan Wahalatantri, Jacob Wiekamp, Namsang Nembang, Antoine Zigani and Lars Van Marle.

Mr K Karantzis
Lead Teacher of Science



Year 11 Textiles V&A Trip



Our Year 11 Textiles students recently enjoyed an inspiring visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. During the trip, they explored a variety of galleries showcasing interior design, costume design, product design, and jewellery.

Students had a wonderful time gathering primary research to support their examination preparation, which we hope will spark fresh creativity as they develop ideas for their final practical examination.

Mrs H Woodrow
Subject Leader Textiles/Food

Langham Cycle Mile Marker Competition



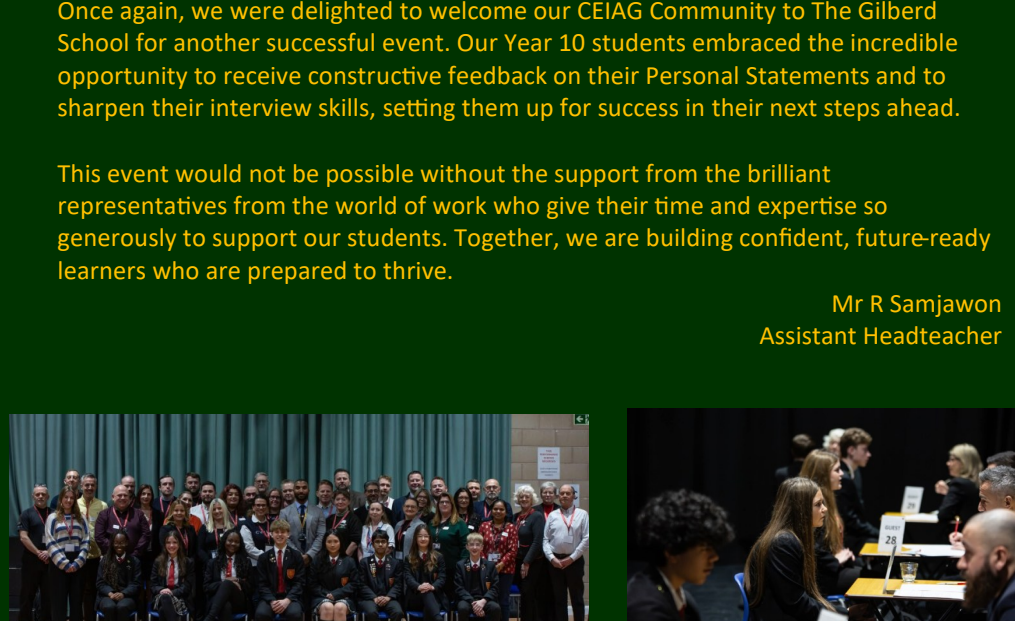
Talented Gilbertdian Abigail Sayers recently won a competition to design and paint a Cycling Mile Marker in Langham. The competition was organised by Sustrans, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust.

Abigail, supported by fellow students Dylan Secreto, Grace Witney-Grey, Bianca Biltac and Ellie Peagram, brought her vibrant winning design to life—braving cold weather and even using an inset day to complete the artwork.

Their teamwork and dedication are truly commendable, and the finished piece is a wonderful contribution to the local community.

Ms N Sayer-Schofield
Curriculum Leader of Art, Technology & Computing

Year 9 Kew Gardens



This month, 180 Year 9 Gilbertdians had the opportunity to visit Kew Gardens, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Students experienced the humid conditions of a tropical rainforest in the famous Palm House, along with numerous other plants collected from across the world's continents. They also got to appreciate the important role plants play in carbon capture and insects as pollinators.

Those Gilbertdians with a head for heights walked across the tree top walk way, taking in the scenery. Once again, our students were a credit to the school.

A photographic competition is now underway. The winning entries will be published in a future issue of the Eagle.

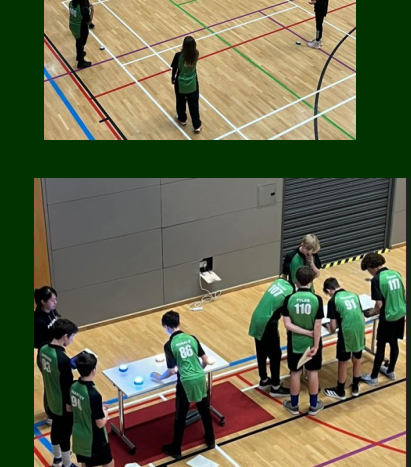
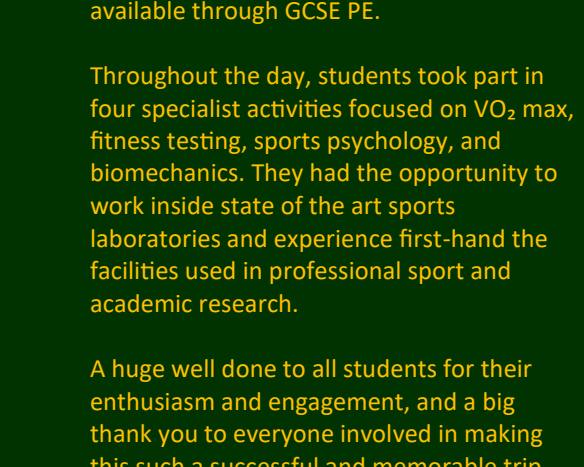
Mrs J Clark
Lead Teacher Humanities

Year 10 Mock Interviews

Once again, we were delighted to welcome our CEIAG Community to The Gilbert School for another successful event. Our Year 10 students embraced the incredible opportunity to receive constructive feedback on their Personal Statements and to sharpen their interview skills, setting them up for success in their next steps ahead.

This event would not be possible without the support from the brilliant representatives from the world of work who give their time and expertise so generously to support our students. Together, we are building confident, future-ready learners who are prepared to thrive.

Mr R Samjawn
Assistant Headteacher

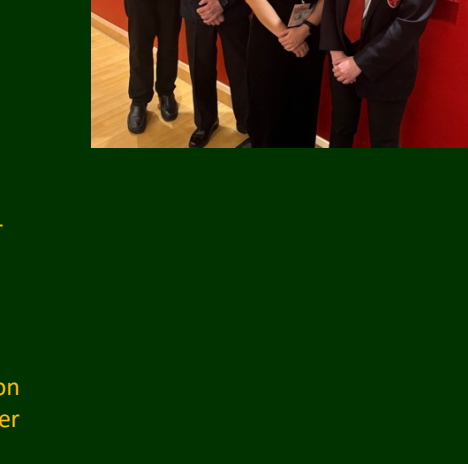


As many of our veteran Year 10 Reading Mentors take on new leadership positions this term, our Year 9 Reading Mentors have been busy updating their training to support with our weekly Paired Reading sessions. Although a little tricky to start with, both 'choral' and 'echo' reading are excellent ways to help develop fluency and expression.

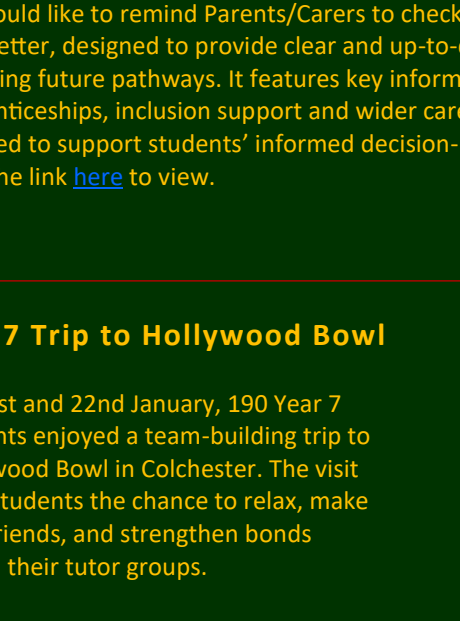
2026 is the National Year of Reading and we are keen to continue building good habits in our school community. Why don't you try setting aside 10 minutes a day to read for pleasure too?

Miss T Bates
Assistant Headteacher

Year 9 Reading Mentors



Year 10 PE Trip to Essex University



On Monday 12th January, 99 of our Year 10 GCSE PE students visited The University of Essex for an inspiring day of Sports Science workshops.

The sessions challenged students across key components of fitness and offered valuable insight into the exciting post-16 pathways available through GCSE PE.

Throughout the day, students took part in four specialist activities focused on VO₂ max, fitness testing, sports psychology, and biomechanics. They had the opportunity to work inside state of the art sports laboratories and experience first-hand the facilities used in professional sport and academic research.

A huge well done to all students for their enthusiasm and engagement, and a big thank you to everyone involved in making this such a successful and memorable trip.

Mrs C Pharaoh
Curriculum Leader of PE

Dora Love Prize

Last week, a group of Gilbertdians attended the launch of this year's Dora Love Prize at Colchester Town Hall, exploring the theme "Bridging Generations" and how remembering past genocides can help shape a better future.

An inspiring introduction from the University of Essex's Professor Schultze set the tone for the day, followed by six creative and research-based workshops that deepened students' understanding and sparked strong project ideas.

A powerful afternoon with young people who have experienced marginalisation reinforced the importance of empathy and inclusion, and the event concluded with a moving reading from the memoirs of Holocaust survivor Maurice Blik.

It was an insightful and meaningful day that has equipped our Dora Love group with compelling ideas for this year's competition, supporting The Gilbert School's ongoing commitment to learning from the past to build a better future.

Ms R Litton
Assistant Headteacher



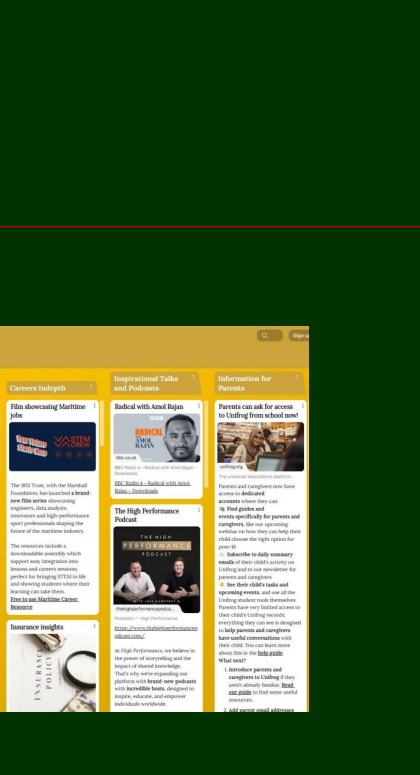
Year 10 Drop Down Day

We were pleased to welcome two external visitors to school; One Sixth Form College and The Royal Navy. Both led engaging and meaningful sessions with all Year 10 students as part of their Personal Development Drop Down Day.

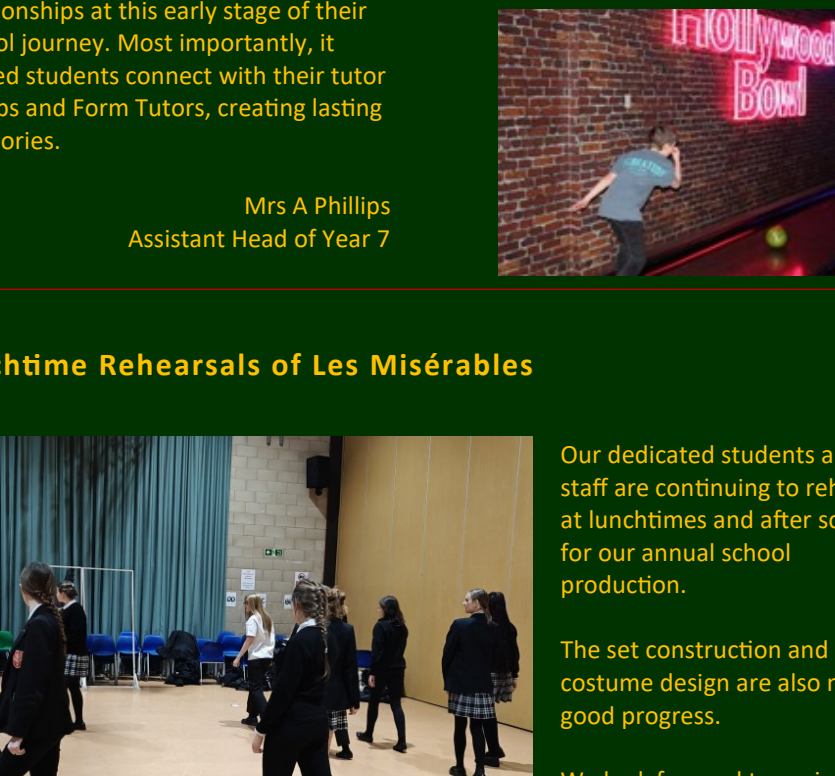
The CEIAG sessions focused on exploring post-16 pathways and career opportunities, giving students valuable insight into the range of options available to them beyond GCSEs.

These encounters formed an important part of our ongoing commitment to supporting students to make informed decisions about their next steps, and we would like to thank Anna and Ian for their time and expertise in helping to inspire and guide our learners.

Mr R Samjawn
Assistant Headteacher



Interactive Careers Newsletter



We would like to remind Parents/Carers to check out our live and interactive Careers Newsletter, designed to provide clear and up-to-date guidance for students and families exploring future pathways. It features key information on post-16 options, apprenticeships, inclusion support and wider career opportunities and is regularly updated to support students' informed decision-making.

Click the link [here](#) to view.

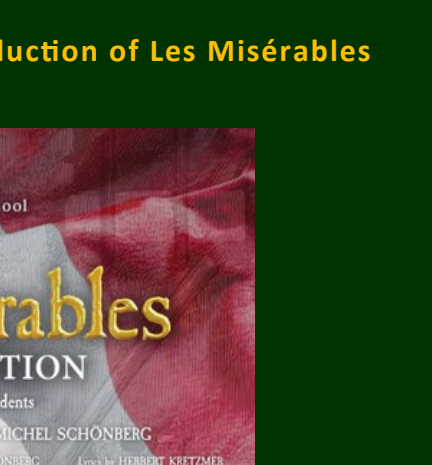
Year 7 Trip to Hollywood Bowl

On 21st and 22nd January, 190 Year 7 students enjoyed a team-building trip to Hollywood Bowl in Chichester. The visit gave students the chance to relax, make new friends, and strengthen bonds within their tutor groups.

Students took part in friendly bowling competitions, cheering in for their classmates and celebrating each other's achievements. They also enjoyed pool and arcade games, adding extra fun to the evening.

The trip supported teamwork, communication, and positive relationships at this early stage of their school journey. Most importantly, it helped students connect with their tutor groups and Form Tutors, creating lasting memories.

Mrs A Phillips
Assistant Head of Year 7



Lunchtime Rehearsals of Les Misérables



Our dedicated students and staff are continuing to rehearse at lunchtimes and after school for our annual school production.

The set construction and costume design are also making good progress.

We look forward to seeing the culmination of their efforts in the performance of the show from 10th to 14th February.

Miss A Bird
Deputy Headteacher



The Gilbert School Production of Les Misérables - Purchase tickets here

Tickets on sale for The Gilbert Production of Les Misérables



The Gilbert School Production of Les Misérables - Purchase tickets here

Co-Curricular Provision

Information on our co-curricular programme can be found [here](#).

Careers and Alumni

Join our CEIAG Community. Calling all Gilbert Alumni and employers to be part of our careers provision at The Gilbert School. Should you wish to be involved in events this academic year, working with our students and want to know more, please contact careers@gilberd.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dates for your diary

Assessment Weeks
2nd to 6th February (Y9)

Y11 Food Practical Exams
2nd to 6th February

School Production (whole school)
9th February (Dress Rehearsal)
10th to 14th February (Tues-Sat)

Student Vaccinations
Thursday, 12th February (Y8 HPV 2nd round)

Non Pupil Day
Friday, 13th February

Half Term
w/c 16th February

First Day of Term
Monday, 23rd February

Y11 MFL Mock Oral Exams
23rd February to 2nd March

Assessment Weeks
23rd February to 6th March (Y10)
w/c 16th March (Y11)

Y9 Options Event
Wednesday, 25th February
3.20-4.20pm (Students)
6.30-8.00pm (Parents/Carers)

Y11 Drama Practical Exams
2nd to 3rd March

Y11 Core Mock Exams
w/c 9th March

Y9 Parents' Evenings (face-to-face)
Wednesday, 11th March (X-Pop)
Wednesday, 25th March (Y-Pop)

Y10 Work Experience
w/c 9th March (X-Pop)
w/c 16th March (Y-Pop)

Y11 Music Solo Performances
w/c 23rd March

Last Day of Spring Term
Friday, 27th March

Easter Holidays
30th March to 10th April

First Day of Summer Term
Monday, 13th April

Y11 Dance Practical Exams (Choreography)
Wednesday, 15th April

Y8 Parents' Evenings (online)
Wednesday, 15th April (X-Pop)
Wednesday, 22nd April (Y-Pop)

Y11 MFL Oral Exams
16th to 20th April
27th to 29th April

Assessment Weeks
20th April to 1st May (Y7)

Y11 Art Exam
21st to 22nd April

Y11 Textiles Practical Exam
21st to 22nd April