



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 Gilberd 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 Gilberdians.

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 Gilberd 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.

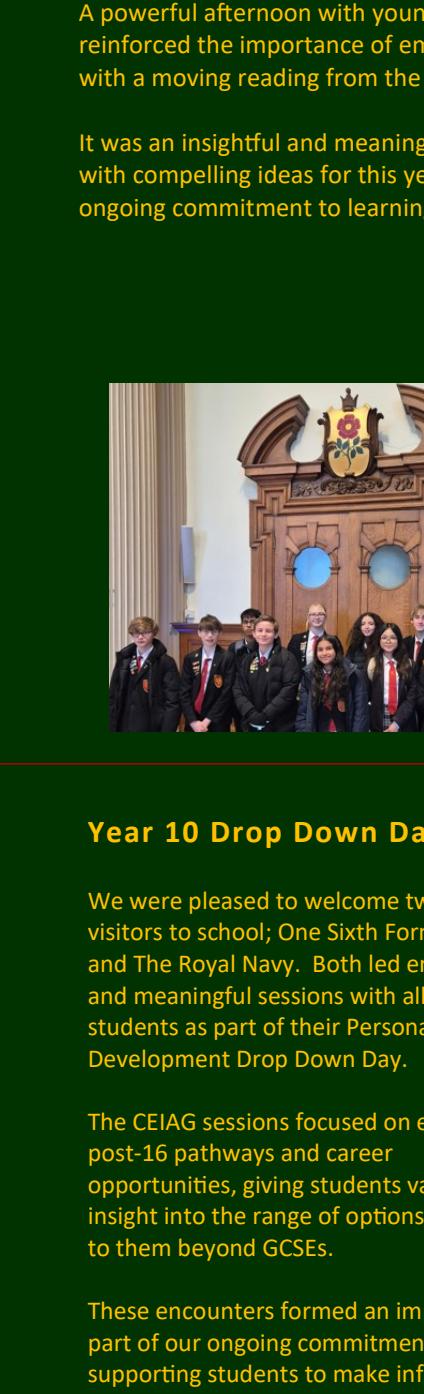
Whilst our Gilberdians did not win the competition, their teamwork, enthusiasm and problem solving skills were excellent.

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

Mr K Karantzas  
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 Gilberdian 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.

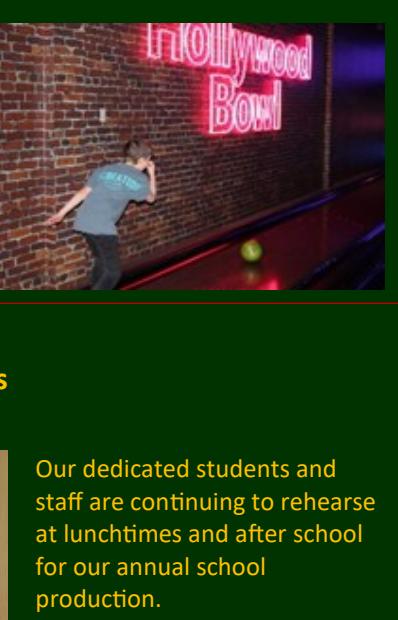


Abigail, supported by fellow students Dylan Secreto, Grace Withey-Grey, Bianca Bilita and Ellie Peagram, brought their vibrant winning design to life—braving cold weather and even using an inset day to complete the artwork.

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 Gilberdians 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 Gilberdians 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 Gilberd 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 Samjawon

Assistant Headteacher



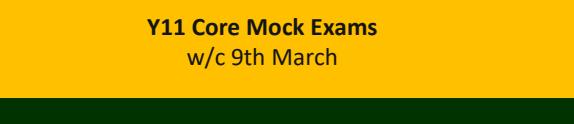
As many of our veteran Year 10 Reading Mentors take on new leadership positions this term, our Year 9 Reading Mentors have been busy updating their training to support with our weekly Paired Reading sessions. Although a little tricky to start with, both 'choral' and 'echo' reading are excellent ways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



On Monday 12th January, 99 of our Year 10 Essex 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 VO<sub>2</sub> max, biomechanics, sports psychology, and biomechanics. They had the opportunity to work alongside the art of handball and the facilities used in professional sport and academic research.

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

Mrs C Pharaoh

Curriculum Leader of PE

The trip supported teamwork, communication, and positive school journey. Most importantly, their help students connect with their tutor groups, creating lasting memories.

Mrs A Phillips

Assistant Head of Year 7

## 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 Drop Down Day.

The CEIAG pathways focused on exploring opportunities, giving students valuable insight into the range of options available to them beyond GCSEs.

Mr R Samjawon

Assistant Headteacher

## Year 7 Trip to Hollyoaks Bowl

On 21st and 22nd January, 190 Year 7 students enjoyed a team-building trip to Hollyoaks Bowl in Chelmsford to relax, make new friends, and strengthen bonds within their tutor groups.

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

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## Interactive Careers Newsletter

We would like to remind Parents/Carers to check out our live and interactive Careers Newsletter, designed for Parents/Carers to provide clear and up-to-date options for students and families.

It features clear and up-to-date options for students and families, including support for apprenticeships, inclusion support and wider career opportunities and is regularly updated to support students' informed decision-making.

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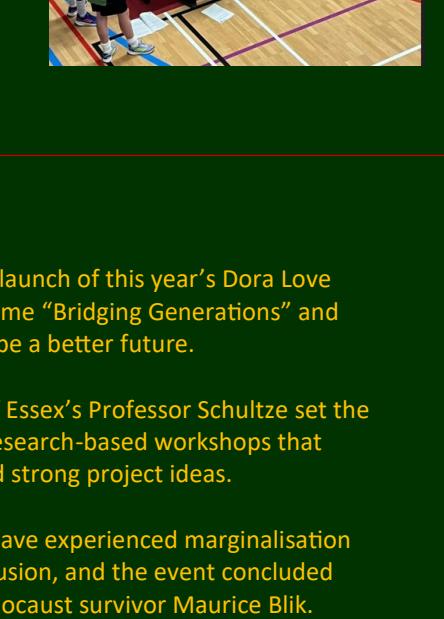
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