



October 2026

THE EAGLE

Message from the Headteacher

This half term has provided several valuable opportunities to welcome parents into school. It was lovely to see so many Year 7 families at our Information Evening and to hear how students are settling into Gilberd School life. We have also been delighted by the enthusiasm with which Year 7 have taken advantage of the many co-curricular activities on offer.

Our Year 11 Post-16 Information Evening was equally well attended, giving students and parents an opportunity to speak directly with a range of education, training and employment providers and begin considering the choices that lie ahead.

After half term, Year 11 will turn their attention to mock examinations and post-16 applications. The mock timetable, information Evening presentations and details of our revision support programme have all been emailed home. It is encouraging to see so many Year 11 students attending revision sessions in preparation for the mocks. We encourage parents to check their inboxes regularly for further information and key updates.

It has been particularly pleasing to see so many students taking advantage of the opportunities available to them this term, whether through sport, music, clubs, societies, competitions or other activities. Trying something new can very often result in some of the most valuable experiences for our students.

As we begin the next half term, I would encourage every student to think about what they can become involved in, what they might challenge themselves to try and what contribution they can make to our school community. The students who gain the most from their time at school are often those who choose to participate fully in everything that school life has to offer. I hope you enjoy reading about some of these activities below.

Mr J Mitchell
Headteacher

Year 6 Musical Aptitude Tests

The Gilberd School Music Aptitude Tests have now concluded, welcoming a record-breaking number of over 200 applicants this year.

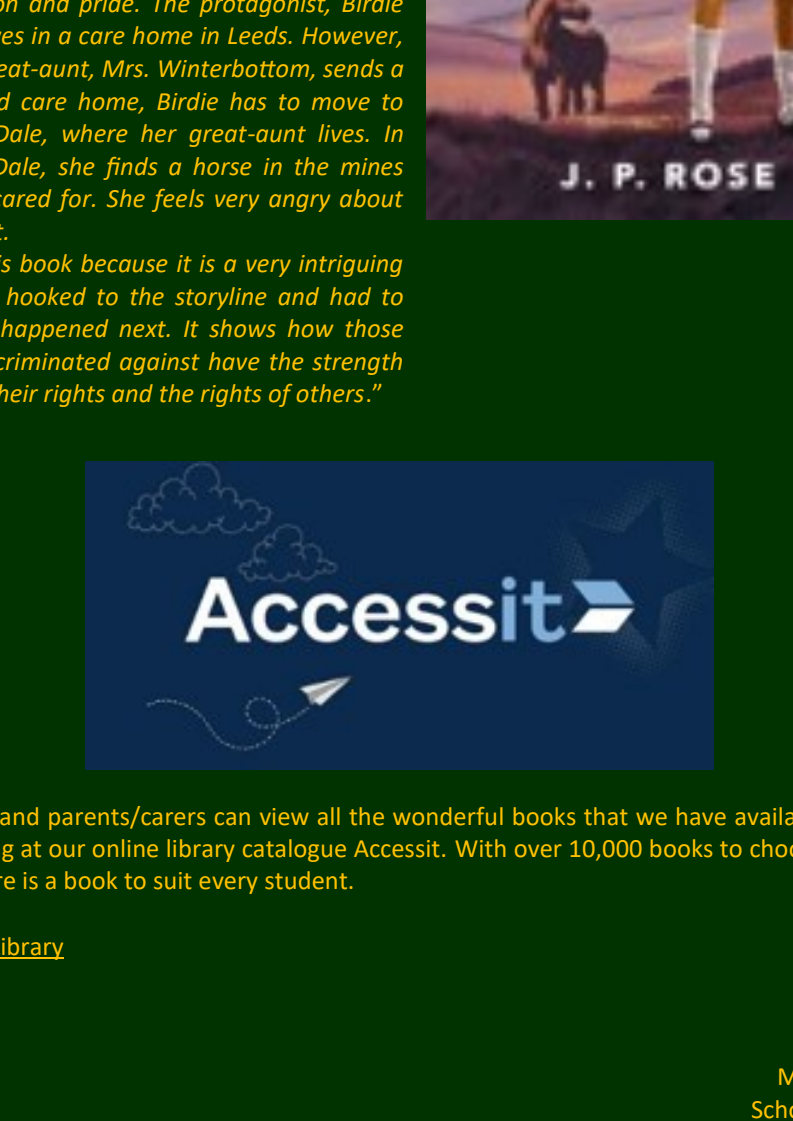
The high level of interest reflects the growing enthusiasm for music education and the wealth of opportunities available within our thriving music department. Throughout the assessment process, candidates demonstrated enthusiasm, commitment and a passion for music.

We wish every candidate the very best of luck and look forward to sharing the outcomes with families in due course.

Mr R Hanlon
Subject Leader of Music



Visit from Andy Unwin MBE



This month, Years 9 and 10 had the opportunity to hear from Andy Unwin MBE about the remarkable Expedition Yorkshire Warrior.

Andy and three fellow soldiers rowed 4,000 nautical miles from New York to Cornwall, completing the journey in just 73 days despite facing a tropical storm, equipment failures and food shortages along the way.

Andy spoke to students about resilience, willpower and overcoming adversity, sharing how determination and teamwork helped the crew achieve their goal.

Sgt Tanner
Combined Cadet Force

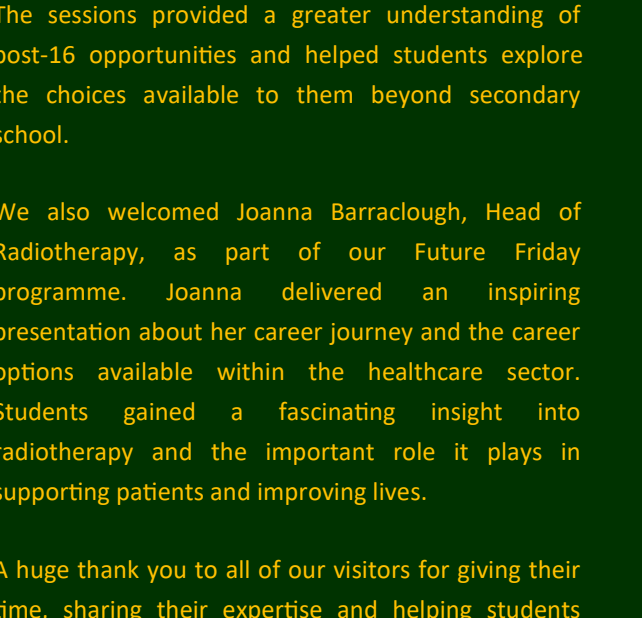
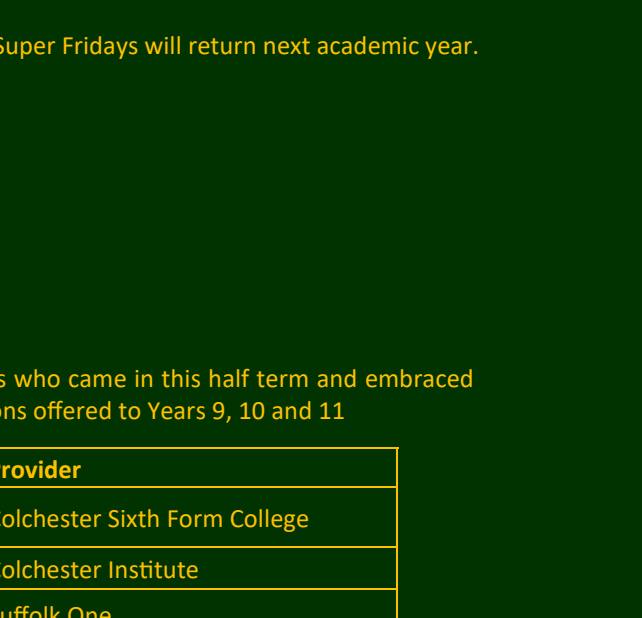
The Gilberd School Library News

On Thursday, 8th October, The Gilberd School Library welcomed 71 students and staff who took part in the National Literacy Trust's 'Take 10 to Read'.

The event formed part of the National Year of Reading campaign and aimed to contribute to a global effort to achieve the highest number of people reading within a 12-hour period.

As part of the event, participants also enjoyed listening to well-known authors reading extracts from their books and sharing insights into their stories.

Thank you to everyone who took part and supported this reading initiative.



Our team of **Student Librarians** from Years 8-11 are now fully trained and ready to support library users during break and lunchtime.

Volunteering their time throughout the week, they help with issuing, renewing and returning books, shelving stock, supporting library events and assisting with IT queries.

Their contribution plays an important role in keeping the Library running smoothly and welcoming for all students.

We look forward to seeing the positive contribution our Student Librarians may make throughout the year.

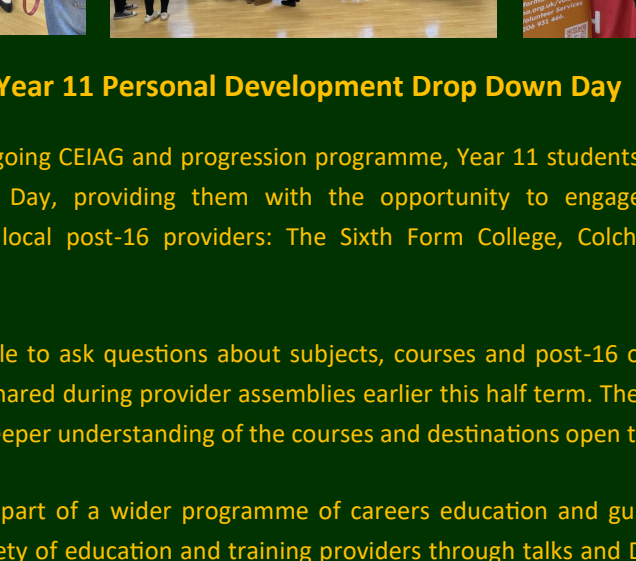
As part of the Library's Golden Ticket competition, students who find a Golden Ticket hidden inside a library book can earn extra house points and a chocolate bar by submitting a review of their chosen book.

Satyaki Mazumdar in Year 8 recently found a Golden Ticket and submitted a review of *Birdie* by J.P. Rose, sharing his thoughts on the book's storyline, characters and themes.

In his below review, Satyaki reflected on the book's storyline, characters and themes, explaining why he found it such an engaging read.

"Birdie is a story set in 1952. It is a story of determination and pride. The protagonist, Birdie Bagshaw, lives in a care home in Leeds. However, when her great-aunt, Mrs. Winterbottom, sends a letter to said care home, Birdie has to move to Barrington Dale, where her great-aunt lives. In Barrington Dale, she finds a horse in the mines who is not cared for. She feels very angry about this prospect."

I enjoyed this book because it is a very intriguing book. I was hooked to the storyline and had to know what happened next. It shows how those who are discriminated against have the strength to fight for their rights and the rights of others."



Students and parents/carers can view all the wonderful books that we have available for loan by looking at our online library catalogue Accessit. With over 10,000 books to choose from we have there is a book to suit every student.

[Accessit Library](#)

Mrs C Jenkins
School Librarian

Geographical Society Trip to Beth Chatto Gardens

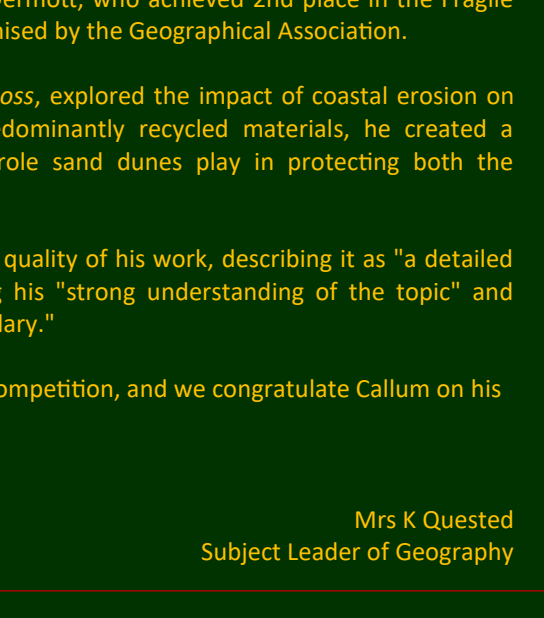
Geographical Society students recently visited Beth Chatto Gardens to learn more about horticultural techniques and looking after plants in different environments.

The visit included a guided tour exploring how the gardens are maintained in a changing climate, as well as a behind-the-scenes look at how new plants are nurtured. Students also gained an insight into the roles of the staff and volunteers who work there.

Our students did exceptionally well during an outdoor practical learning session where they practised new techniques of taking cuttings and potting new plants.

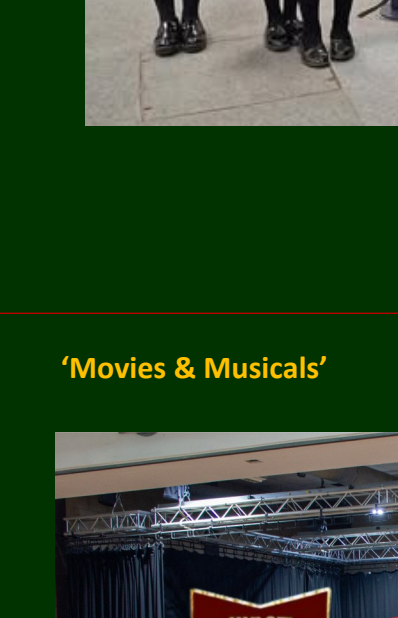
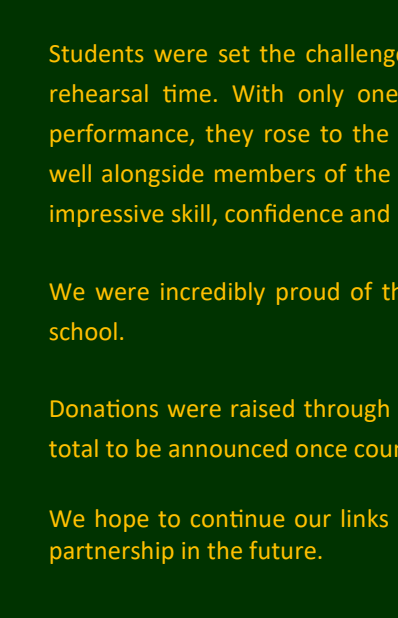
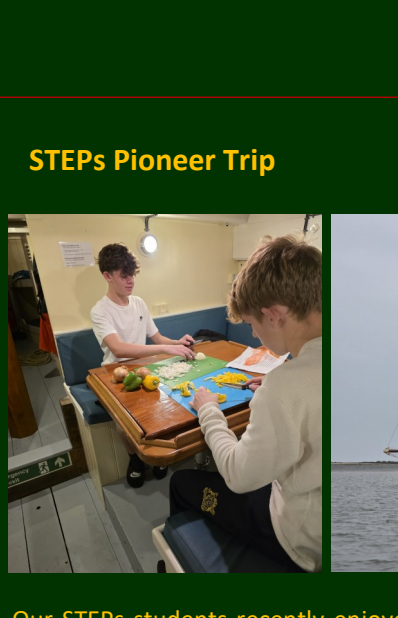
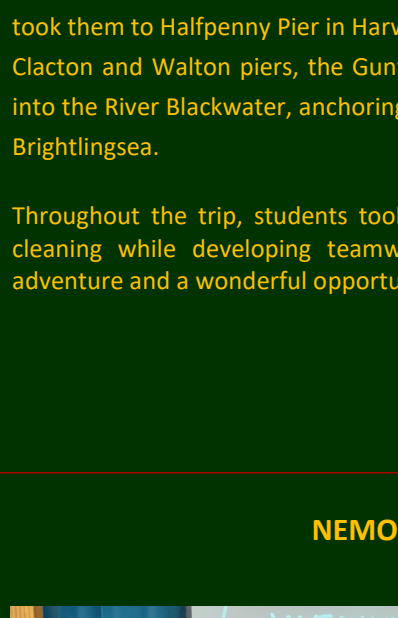
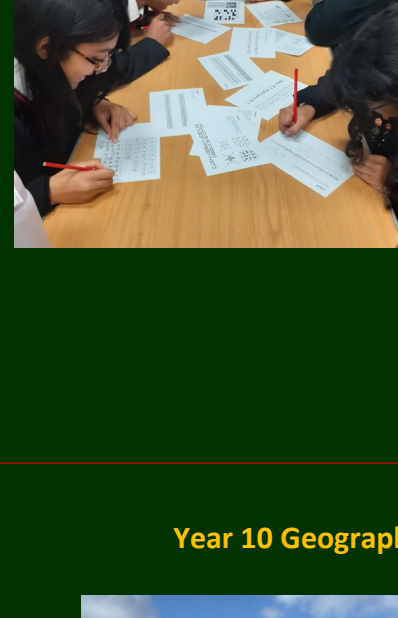
They had a very productive afternoon and took away a range of their own small plants to look after and develop at home!

Mr J Campbell
Teacher of Geography



CEIAG News

Super Fridays



WOW! Super Fridays have been incredible this half term.

Our Super Fridays programme has provided students with a wide range of opportunities to engage with employers, professionals and education providers this half term.

We were pleased to welcome representatives from Thomas Gainsborough School, who hosted a Lunchtime Drop-in session for Years 9, 10 and 11, as well as delivering an assembly to Year 11 students. The sessions provided a greater understanding of post-16 opportunities and helped students explore the choices available to them beyond secondary school.

We also welcomed Joanna Barraclough, Head of Radiotherapy, as part of our Future Friday programme. Joanna delivered an inspiring presentation about her career journey and the career options available within the healthcare sector. Students gained a fascinating insight into radiotherapy and the important role it plays in supporting patients and improving lives.

A huge thank you to all of our visitors for giving their time, sharing their expertise and helping students consider their future ambitions.

Super Fridays will return next academic year.

Thank you to all the providers who came in this half term and embraced our Lunch Time Drop In sessions offered to Years 9, 10 and 11.

Date	Provider
4th September 2026	Colchester Sixth Form College
11th September 2026	Colchester Institute
18th September 2026	Suffolk One
22nd September 2026	Colchester Royal Grammar
25th September 2026	Sigma Sixth
2nd October 2026	Colchester New
9th October 2026	Colchester Institute Apprenticeships
14th October 2026	Colchester Grammar Sixth
16th October 2026	Thomas Gainsborough School

Let's Talk Post-16



We recently welcomed the Vice Principal of Colchester Grammar School Sixth Form at Colchester High School for Girls, part of the Alpha Trust, to The Gilberd School to present their new co-educational Sixth Form offer for the September 2027 entry.

The session provided a useful opportunity for our Year 11 students to learn more about the exciting provision available, including the academic, enrichment and personal development programmes on offer. Students were also able to gain a greater understanding of what life at Sixth Form might look like and the choices open to them after Year 11.

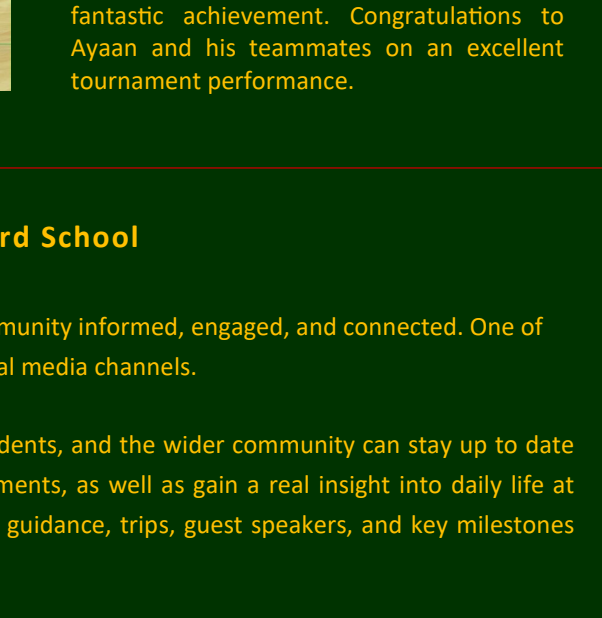
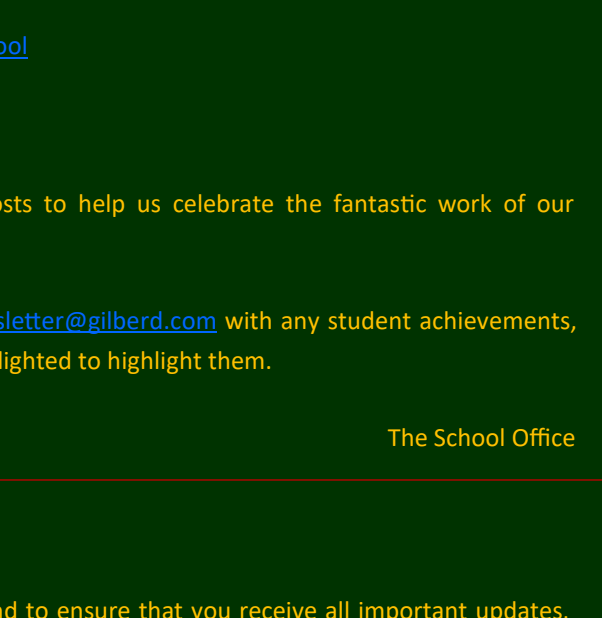
The presentation was attended by both our Oxbridge cohort and Year 11 students interested in exploring this opportunity, with students engaging positively and asking insightful questions throughout.

We are grateful to our visitor for taking the time to share their vision for the future and look forward to continuing to support students as they plan for life after Year 11.

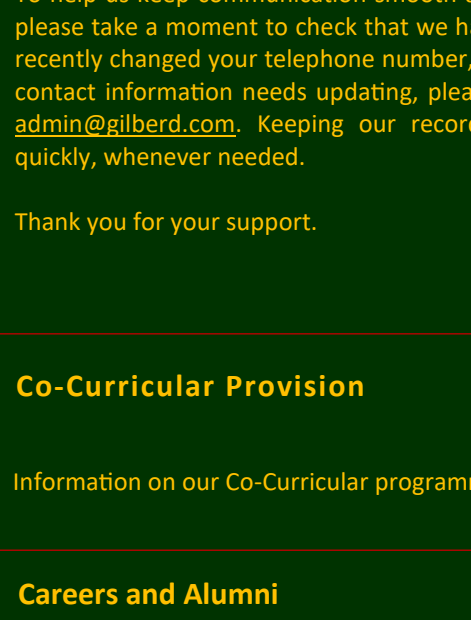
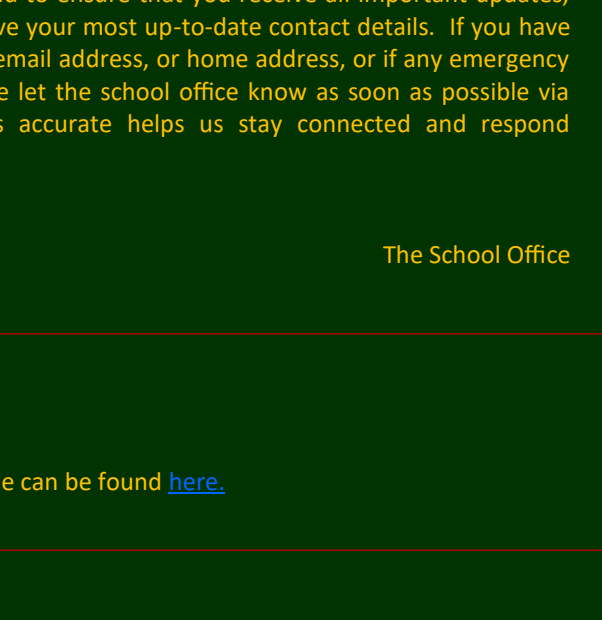
We were pleased to welcome back Gilberd Alumnus Charlie Jenkins, who visited the school to share his career journey with our Year 9 and Year 10 students.

Charlie spoke about his work as an Archivist, giving students an insight into his experiences at the Houses of Parliament and his current role at Kew Gardens. He highlighted the skills, opportunities and pathways available within the heritage and cultural sectors, while reflecting on how his journey began at The Gilberd School.

The session provided students with a valuable opportunity to learn about a unique career path and hear first-hand about life beyond school.



Year 11 Information Evening



Thank you to all Year 11 students, parents and carers who attended our recent Information Evening. Both the North and South Halls were filled with meaningful conversations, as students and families engaged directly with education providers, employers and industry professionals to explore their future options.

The event featured a range of post-16 and post-18 providers, alongside representatives from the world of work, helping students understand the range of education, training and employment routes open to them. Students interested in highly competitive university applications also attended a dedicated Oxbridge presentation.

The evening concluded with a presentation covering examination guidance, revision strategies, subject-specific information, careers education and all educational pathways, including A Levels, T Levels, apprenticeships and vocational routes, ensuring that students and families are well informed as they make decisions about their future.

