

The Rookwood School Newsletter

Rook News

Friday 14 December 2018



Dear Parents,

In this morning's final assembly of term, the children thanked all of the staff at Rookwood who have worked tirelessly to support them in their learning, to encourage them to excel in every field, and to give them the opportunities to grow in confidence and spirit.

Whether they are directly involved in learning or whether, by their essential work, they allow learning to happen, I am sure that parents will join me in thanking all of the Rookwood staff.

Merry Christmas,

Mr Kirk-Burgess

Carol Service

Our annual Carol Service took place on Wednesday 12 December at St Mary's Church. As always, it was a lovely festive evening and it was wonderful to share this special occasion with so many parents and friends.

Guests were welcomed into the church by the sounds of the Rookwood Brass Ensemble playing Christmas carols. Throughout the service there were amazing performances by our Senior and Lower School choirs as well as some stirring solo pieces.

Pupils from across the school also provided readings to remind us all of the true meaning of Christmas.



Our Carol Service is always the perfect way to round off the Autumn term. Thank you to all the pupils and staff who took part and particularly to Mrs Parsons for all her work in arranging it.

School News – National Champions

On Saturday 1 December, Xen, Amelie and I took part in the ISA National Swimming Championships at the London Olympic Pool. We had qualified to represent London West at the event, and there were seven regions competing from across the whole of England.

Amelie (Y4) was the first to swim in the 50m backstroke – given it was one of her first times competing in a 50m pool, she swam brilliantly coming away with a silver medal and took four seconds off her personal best. I was up next in the 100m backstroke. I have swum at this pool before and really enjoyed it but even still, I was nervous. I swam a strong race and was really pleased to win silver. My next race was the 4x50m medley relay and our team swam exceptionally well to win gold by several seconds. Both Amelie and I were honoured to have our medals presented to us by double Olympian, Chris Walker-Hebborn.

The afternoon session began with my 100m freestyle – it was a great race and I was really pleased to win a second silver medal and get a very good personal best time. There were over 80 races in the event so it was a long day but the racing was exciting and London West were performing really well.

The final races were the 4x50m freestyle relays in which all three of us took part. The teams are made up of the four fastest swimmers in the region and you don't actually get any time to practice changeovers as a team, so the relays can be a bit chaotic. However, London West teams were all strong. Amelie's relay team were up first and she stormed the first leg to give her team a huge lead, which they hung on to to win gold. Next up was Xen's relay team – he swam 3rd leg and again, put in a fantastic swim to bring his team into medal contention. They came away with a well-earned silver medal. Finally, my really team was up. After two legs we were in 3rd, on the 3rd leg our swimmer brought us into a close 2nd position to East Anglia – and I was on the blocks knowing we had a chance. We both took off the blocks neck and neck and were next to each other in the lanes so I knew where the swimmer was. I felt I swam strongly and could see I was pulling away from him. I was really pleased to bring the team home with a gold medal – it was an exhilarating race!

Our medals were presented to us by another swimming Olympian, Joe Roebuck. Rookwood School had three pupils taking part in seven races but in every race we won a medal – we all felt very proud of our individual and team achievements. And to top it all off the day ended with an overall win for London West.

Joshua Armstrong



Lower School Nativity

Earlier this month, our Year 1 and 2 children brought the house down with their performance of 'A Midwife Crisis', a modern nativity about a very busy midwife, who never misses an important birth, and her very put-upon donkey Steve. The midwife is excited when she hears that a king is about to be born in Bethlehem. She rushes out into the night in search of a shiny golden palace fit for a king. Her donkey Steve doesn't think he's ever heard of Bethlehem Palace, but the midwife is in no mood to listen - where else would a king be born?

The leading roles were brilliantly delivered by Lily and Christopher while Edith and Rio proved to be very accomplished narrators. They were supported by an excellent cast which included Mary and Joseph, the three kings, shepherds, angels, sheep, stars, census takers and townspeople who all sang beautifully and danced enthusiastically. It was wonderful to have so many parents, family and friends in the audience and they were enchanted by the performance.

Thank you to our nursery children for kicking off the show with some lovely Christmas songs and to our Senior School band for providing the music. Also, thank you to Mrs Parsons, Miss Walsh, Mrs Wyatt and Mr Walker for supporting the children to put on such a great show.



Lower School News

U10/11 Football season review

We enjoyed an exciting and competitive Autumn Term and played five matches and a tournament. We had fixtures against: St Francis, Sherfield, Leehurst Swan, Avondale, Sherfield tournament and Leehurst Swan again. Some matches were harder than others, especially Leehurst Swan as they had some good players who shot on target and tackled well. We did, however, manage to draw 1-1 with them when we played them at home, although we lost 3-2 when we played away.

However, playing St Francis school was easier as I felt that their A team didn't play as a team and we managed to beat them 4-0! We had mixed fortunes at the Sherfield tournament. Although we only lost one match out of six, we came 7th overall! During the course of the season, we have improved dramatically in many areas, such as passing, shooting and scanning.

I feel privileged to be the Captain of Rookwood's Lower School football team and we look forward to more success on the pitch next term.

Nicholas Kitching Year 6

Fire Brigade visit

The Lower School thoroughly enjoyed their visit from the Fire Brigade. Year 1 & 2 had the opportunity to get hands-on with a firefighter's equipment and uniform as well as try out the fire engine driving simulator. Year 5 & 6 learned about fire safety during a special assembly.

Year 2 has recently been learning about the Great Fire of London so the visit was a great chance to hear about how firefighting has changed over the centuries.



Fossil hunters

The Children in Year 3 have been looking at 'Rocks and Soils' this term in Science. They have studied the life of famous fossil hunter, Mary Anning and then had an attempt at making their own fossils using clay and plaster of Paris.

They were very excited and proud of their results when they broke the moulds open to see what was inside. We are sure you will agree that their fossils look fantastic and could almost pass for the real thing.



School News

Christingle

This month we held our Lower School Christingle at St Michael's Church in aid of the Children's Society. The national charity runs local projects that help children and young people when they are at their most vulnerable and have no one to turn to.

The Children's Society first introduced Christingle's to the UK 50 years ago and since then they have raised much-needed funds to support their work. It was great to have so many parents and friends join us for the special service. It was such a lovely event and the Lower School choir received many compliments for their rendition of Walking in the Air which they sang while guests entered the church.



Reception

This month saw part of the Reception classroom transformed into a workshop for Santa's elves. In the workshop the children have had the opportunity to develop their literacy, maths and fine motor skills through wrapping presents of different shapes and sizes.

They have also been busy working on different craft activities and have all produced a wonderful Christmas card as well as a Christmas Tree and a paper plate Santa.



Naughty or Nice?

Our Year 4 pupils put on special Christmas performances in the Lower School assembly. Each of them acted out a letter to Santa which they had been rehearsing in their drama lessons.

While some of them acted out scenarios that saw them on Santa's 'Nice List', several of the pieces were about them being on the 'Naughty List' much to the enjoyment of the audience.

Well done to all of them for producing great performances.



Rook News – Senior School



GCSE Assessments

On Friday 30 November, the Year 11 GCSE Drama class performed their final acting assessments in front of an AQA examiner as well as their own family and friends. The students were required to present extracts from published plays and these included work by Shakespeare, John Godber, Dario Fo and the Greek playwright Euripides. The performances took place in the school hall in the afternoon and were well-received by the appreciative audience.

The scripted acting assessment represents 20% of their final Drama GCSE grade. Last March, the students also completed their devising unit worth 40%. The final 40% is in the form of the written examination which the students shall sit in May 2019. Mrs Blackmore said: "I remain immensely proud of my Year 11 students. Helping to develop the pupils' confidence to the point where they have been able to play their chosen roles with such maturity and believability has been an absolute pleasure."

Pupil Oliver commented "I found it a challenge learning all the words. With a lot of practice, Morgan and I pulled off the best performance we could have done. Thank you to Mrs Blackmore for going out of her way to help us."

National Gallery

On Thursday 6 December, Miss Treasure and Miss Brown took Year 8 to The National Gallery in London to see the French Impressionist paintings that they had been studying in school.

The pupils enjoyed a fun and informative talk about the Impressionist style and how it was radically different from previous generations of French painters. Both Miss Treasure and Miss Brown felt proud of the pupils as they paid close attention and asked many intelligent questions.

After lunch they walked down Whitehall to the South Bank, admiring Nelson's Column, the historic building of Horse Guards, Downing Street, (where they believe they may have seen the Prime Minister being driven in a car with darkened windows) and Big Ben, unrecognisable under scaffolding and sheets.

They spent an hour on the South Bank enjoying the Christmas market and buying food and presents before returning to school.



Dates For Your Diary

Week commencing 7 January 2019

Monday 7 January
Staff inset

Tuesday 8 January
Staff inset

Wednesday 9 January
Spring Term commences
Year 11 Option GCSE Mock Examinations
Year 6 Senior School information meeting 16.00 – 17.00

Thursday 10 January
Year 11 Option GCSE Mock Examinations
Second Hand Uniform Shop open 16.00

Friday 11 January
Year 11 Option GCSE Mock Examinations

Saturday 12 January
Senior School Beauty and the Beast full cast rehearsal

Week commencing 14 January 2019

Monday 14 January
Year 11 Option GCSE Mock Examinations
Year 9 Immunisation Talk

Tuesday 15 January
Year 11 Option GCSE Mock Examinations

Wednesday 16 January
Year 7/8 Indoor District Football 5-a-side 15.30 – 17.00 (H)
Senior School Youth Speaks

Thursday 17 January
Year 9 Options Evening

Friday 18 January
Year 8 Living Rainforest Trip

Week commencing 21 January 2019

Monday 21 January
Year 11 Mock GCSE French Speaking Examinations

Tuesday 22 January
Year 11 Mock GCSE German Speaking Examinations
Year 11 Invitation Parent's Evening 16.00 – 18.30

Wednesday 23 January
Year 11 Mock GCSE German Speaking Examinations
U11 Girls Netball v St Francis (A) 10.00 – 12.00
U13 & U11 Rugby v St Francis (A) 14.30 – 16.00
Year 7/8 Basketball @ Rookwood 15.45 – 17.00

Thursday 24 January
Open Morning for prospective parents 9.30 – 12.30

Friday 25 January
11+ Scholarship Day