

Seize the day

EXCELLENCE. RESILIENCE. INCLUSION.

Headteacher: Mr Alexander Silk, MA , NPQH

16th January 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

The second week of the term has brought a renewed sense of energy and momentum across the school, with students settling confidently back into routines and learning continuing with focus and purpose

I am also delighted to extend a warm welcome to three new members of the Connaught team who have joined us this term:

- **Ms Saaid (English), who has been covering a long-term absence during the last term as well, is an excellent addition to the team and is fitting in seamlessly.**
- **Ms Okoruwa (Mathematics), joins us following the departure of Ms Adoamnei at the end of last term.**
- **Ms Manzoni (Spanish) has joined the school team, replacing Ms Valluerca from January.**

We are delighted to have them join our community and look forward to the positive contributions they will make to teaching, learning, and the wider life of the school.

Sometime before the holidays, I shared an update regarding the new Ofsted framework and what it means for schools and families. The Director of Education at the local authority, Mary Jarrett, has since provided a helpful letter that reinforces and clarifies these points. I have attached the letter to the email with this school's weekly letter for your information.

With the very cold weather, we do open the school at lunchtime to allow students a space to go during the longer lunchtime break, out of the cold. I would like to clarify expectations around additional layers. We absolutely understand the need for students to keep warm, and (I hope) common sense always prevails at Connaught. Students are allowed to wear additional base layers such as vests, thermal tops or leggings. Our only request is that, much like underwear, these layers are not visible. They should be worn under a long-sleeved shirt and should never be seen; with short-sleeved shirts they can sometimes become visible, which we ask families to avoid. The school jumper provides an additional warm layer but is not a replacement to the school blazer, and students may wear a coat (when outdoors). Woolly hats, gloves and scarves are also appropriate for travelling to and from school as well as break and lunchtimes, but they should not be worn in the building and should not be an addition to the school uniform.

For PE lessons, the department makes careful decisions based on weather conditions, health and safety considerations and the nature of the activity, and will adapt plans where necessary.

Ofsted, February 2025

GOOD IN ALL AREAS

Some local community opportunities that I would like to highlight now:

Waltham Forest offers free programmes for parents and carers to help with communication, behaviour and family life, both online and in person. Please see [here](#) to access the January 2026 Parent and Carer Support Programme guide, to explore sessions and book your place.

This year, as part of their [Space4All](#) youth offer, Waltham Forest is offering activities designed for all ages, from juniors (8–12 years) to young adults (up to 25), which include sports, dance, skateboarding, creative workshops, music production and VR gaming. Many venues also provide hot meals and snacks, creating a welcoming space for young people to learn, be creative and stay active.

Winter Wellness: Stay healthy this winter - please see here the [Waltham Forest website](#) page where you will find useful information on keeping warm, getting support with winter fuel payments and boosting your immunity this winter. During winter weather, such as the freezing temperatures we have seen this week, small acts of care can make a big difference for the most vulnerable members of our community.

February Half Term Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme

Bookings open on 19 January 2026 for the Waltham Forest February Half Term Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme, which will run from Monday 16 February to Friday 20 February 2026.

The **HAF** programme provides free holiday clubs, activities, and meals for children and young people across the borough and is designed to support families during the school holidays.

Who the programme supports:

- Children eligible for benefit-related Free School Meals (FSM): Families with school-aged children who receive benefit-related FSM are eligible to book directly onto activities. We strongly encourage eligible families to take advantage of this provision.
- Vulnerable families not in receipt of benefit-related FSM: A limited number of places are available for vulnerable children who do not receive benefit-related FSM. These places must be referred by the school or another professional. Referrals must be submitted by Monday, 9 February 2026. Please note that bookings made without an approved referral will not be **accepted**.
- Children requiring additional support: If your child meets the eligibility criteria and requires additional support to access activities, please contact the HAF team before booking to ensure the provision is suitable and appropriate.

How to book and find out more:

Full details of activities on offer and instructions on how to book can be found [here](#).

For queries relating to the programme, families and professionals can contact Kayla Whiting: kayla.whiting@walthamforest.gov.uk

KS3 Futsal Club



We are excited to announce that a brand-new Futsal Club has started this week on Tuesdays at lunchtime. Open to all KS3 students, this club offers a fantastic opportunity to develop futsal-specific skills such as close control, quick passing, movement, and decision-making in a fast-paced environment. Sessions are led by a female qualified coach from Genesis Futsal Club, providing high-quality coaching in a supportive and inclusive setting. Whether students are new to futsal or looking to build on existing skills, this club is a great way to stay active, learn something new, and enjoy football in a different format.

Empowering Women Through Basketball: Sports BTEC Trip to UEL

On Thursday, our BTEC students took part in an inspiring trip to the University of East London, where they attended a Clinics Basketball session led by NBA coaches. The experience was designed not only to develop athletic performance but also to empower young women, building confidence both on and off the court. The session focused on breathwork strategies for managing pressure, enhancing performance, and confidence-building techniques for young athletes. Students then had the opportunity to put these skills into practice by competing in a shooting competition, applying what they had learned in a high-pressure but supportive environment.



As part of the day, students also received a T-shirt promoting the message “Her Time to Play”, reinforcing the importance of opportunity, inclusion, and empowerment for women in sport.

Attendance Matters

Huge congratulations to 7S who had a fantastic 100% attendance last week



Attendance in the final weeks of last term did drop off but last week we had a renewed high attendance rate. It is worth noting that attendance nationally had dipped by around 0.7% compared to the same period last academic year, with cold, flu and sickness bugs taking a significant toll across the country. That said, we know how crucial attendance is to learning and progress.

I would ask for your continued support in prioritising attendance, wherever possible, as we begin this new term. Let's make a real collective push.

Achievement Points

8F remains at the top of the AP leaderboard with a collective **387 Achievement Points**.

Congratulations to Amarachi (7S) and Amrin (10W) who collected the highest number of APs in KS3 and KS4 last week.

Bedrock Points Leaderboard This Week

Well done students! You will be receiving an achievement post card.

Rosanna Drew R. 7S → 113 points,
Aoife R 8W → 108 points,
Eliza C 7C → 94 points,
Maryam A 8C → 70 points,
Gabrielle D-A 8S → 69 points,
Sarah Z 7C → 60 points,
Hafsah A 7C → 56 points,
Maryam R → 54 points,
Aysha B 7C → 54 points,
Saffiyah H 8S → 50 points

Words We Are Learning

The vocabulary we are focusing on this term are: ***gauge, unscathed, acclaim, astute, incorporate***

Reading Matters Form Winners

Well done to 8W! This week we saw the highest number of minutes across the board, and Year 8 have done exceptionally well. As always, a little treat was given as a reward.



Our top reader from each form, and receiving a postcard, are:

Mahnour A 7C, Abigail M 7F, Rosanna Drew R 7S, Imaan M 7W
Zairah A 8C, Haniah K 8F, Sofia A 8S, Leila W 8W
Dixie D 9C, Asma W 9F, Khadija N 9S, Sakeenah P 9W

Next week's assemblies

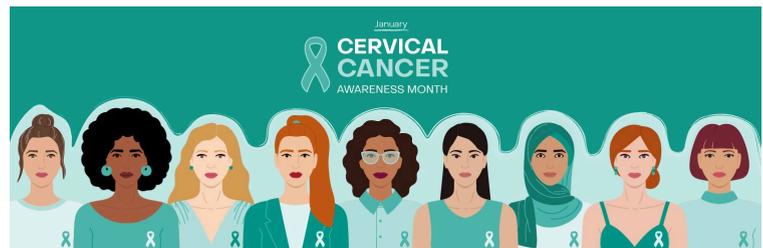
The focus of next week's assemblies will be Cervical Cancer Prevention Week. This is an annual campaign, which this year falls from 19th - 25th January, which aims to raise awareness about cervical screening and the HPV vaccine to facilitate early detection and to prevent cervical cancer.

The key focus areas will be:

- Cervical Screening: Attending appointments to detect HPV and abnormal cells early.
- HPV Vaccination: Sharing information about the HPV vaccine for young people to protect against the viruses that cause most cervical cancers.
- Awareness: Highlighting symptoms, supporting those affected, and addressing barriers to screening uptake.

Why it matters:

- Cervical cancer is preventable, with screening and vaccination saving thousands of lives annually in the UK.
- Despite effective tools, many eligible individuals miss screenings, highlighting the need for ongoing awareness.

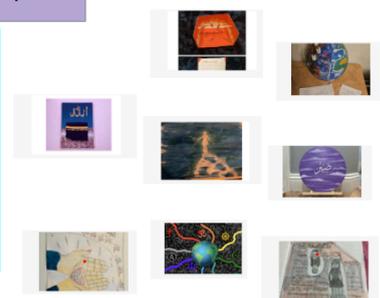


World Religion Day Assembly

The assemblies this week were themed around World Religion Day (which falls on 18th January) and were led beautifully by some of our amazing year 9 students (Mouna, Habibah, Fatima and Sianna from 9F). We also celebrated students who took part in the Spirited Art Competition:

A huge well done to the students who participated in the 'Spirited Art Competition':

- ★ Aisha
- ★ Eliza
- ★ Genevieve
- ★ Ilona
- ★ Rania
- ★ Sakeenah
- ★ Zahra
- ★ Zara



The winners are:

Zara from Y11 for her digital creation representing different faiths but as one humanity.



The winners are:

Genevieve y7 - for this creative masterpiece on God's Good Earth and the passion she has showed for how it should be taken care of.



7C Form Assembly

Year 7 has been treated to another amazing assembly, this time put on by 7C on the topic of **Mental Health and Wellbeing** as part of our pastoral curriculum. It was wonderful to see the whole form get involved and work together, showcasing their embodiment of our Connaught values of Inclusion, Excellence and Resilience.

Special thanks go to:

- Abigail (overseeing, organising and narrating)
- Eirini, Hiba & Hafsa (creating and delivering the resources)

Thank you, 7C and we look forward to the next Year 7 assembly from 7W.



Nurture Club Fun

This half-term several year 7 students have come together to support each other with the opportunities and challenges of transitioning to secondary school, and to discuss strategies to help them when things get tricky.

In this week's session we discussed things that were going well and strategies we could use when things get challenging. The students focused on square breathing, finger breathing and even made their own calming jars to use at home. Well done, Year 7!



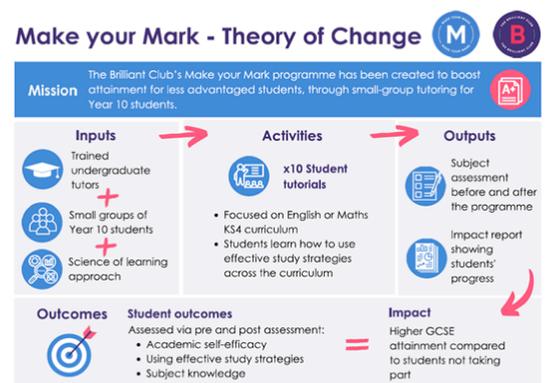
GCSE Drama Trip to the Theatre

On Friday 9th January the Year 11 Drama students went to the Phoenix Theatre, London to watch *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*. The students had a fantastic time stepping into the world of Hawkins, Indiana, and experienced a hi-tech show which used; projections, lighting, sound and SFX to bring the story to life. They will now use this performance as a key reference point when writing about live theatre for their summer examination.



Brilliant Club Make Your Mark Programme

Twelve year 10 students have been selected to take part in the Make your Mark programme, an academic programme run by The Brilliant Club, in partnership with Arden University this Spring term. The Brilliant Club is an organisation that supports pupils in



non-selective state schools to raise attainment and to progress to university, if that's what they choose to do.

What is the Make your Mark programme?

- Make your Mark aims to raise pupil attainment at GCSE in either Maths or English.
- The students who have been selected for the programme have been because, although they are already doing well at school, we believe that they have the potential to achieve even more ambitious grades.
- Pupils will be taught in groups of 6, for 10 tutorials in either Maths or English, which will take place in school. They will also learn proven study strategies that can be used in all subjects. Tutors are recruited and trained by The Brilliant Club.
- Pupils who complete the programme will be invited to attend a celebration event at Arden University with their school group. Here they will learn about university life and celebrate completion of the programme.

The programme starts this coming Wednesday (21st February) after school.

Careers

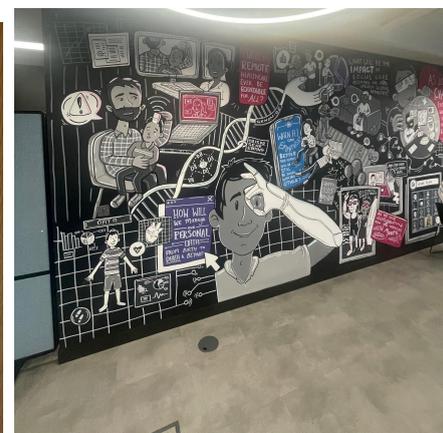
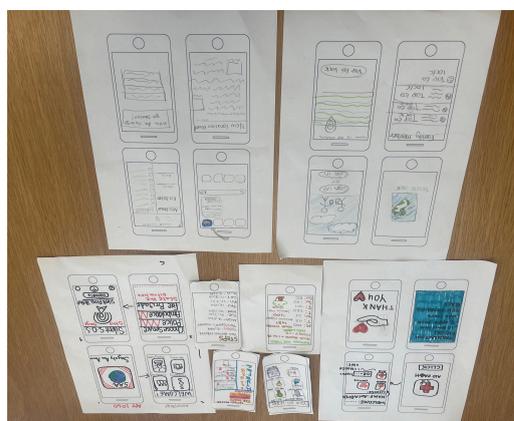
Y8 VIP Day @ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

On 16 January 2026, Mr Kajue selected 14 other students and me to visit Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). TCS is based in Bishopsgate, near Liverpool Street, with its global headquarters located in Mumbai.

During the visit, we met and spoke with several senior members of staff and took part in a range of engaging activities, including speed networking, design thinking, and a presentation on innovation.

One of the tasks involved designing an app to support our community. We generated many creative and positive ideas. We are very grateful to TCS for providing this opportunity and hope to visit again in the future.

Atikah I (8C)



Extra-Curricular Provision

Please find the ECP schedule for the Spring term below:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Before school	Library Club 7:50-8:20 Library ET	Library Club 7:50-8:20 Library ET	Library Club 7:50-8:20 Library ET	Library Club 7:50-8:20 Library ET	Library Club 7:50-8:20 Library ET
	Breakfast Club 7:40-8:20 Dining hall PET	Breakfast Club 7:40-8:20 Dining hall DIA/PET	Breakfast Club 7:40-8:20 Dining hall DIA/PET	Breakfast Club 7:40-8:20 Dining hall DIA/PET	Breakfast Club 7:40-8:20 Dining hall DIA/PET
Lunch time	Year 8-11 Ted Team SIL HT Office	Year 8-11 Ted Team SIL HT Office	Year 8-11 Ted Team SIL HT Office	Year 8-11 Ted Team SIL HT Office	Year 8-11 Ted Team SIL HT Office
	LEGO Club CJ/DF Room 20	Homework Club NA Room 20	Homework Club DL Room 20	Homework Club RIC Room 20	Year 11 Biology Clinic AMR Mobile
	Key Stage 4 Art and Photography Club ELB Room 9	Key Stage 3 Reading Club RAH Room 36	Key Stage 4 Art Club HCO Room 17	Key Stage 3 Computing and Coding Club ALK Room 33	11x/Ma6 Maths Intervention RGN Room 3
		Year 7 Cooking Club WAL Room H1	Year 7 Nuture Club ELK Room 42	11x/Ma3 Maths Intervention PET Room 10	Rollerskating Club DIA/GAG Gym
		Year 11 Geography Intervention DES Room 7	Year 11 Sociology Intervention KAD Room 5	Badminton Club GAG Gym Week B	Crochet Club HUS Room 17
		Year 11 English Literature Revision CAR Room 34	Textiles Club RAN Room H2	Year 9 Poetry Club BUR Room 35	Year 8 Connections Club ALI Room 38
		Year 11 History Intervention KLE Room 6	Green Ambassadors DES Room 7 Week A Only	Year 11 French Intervention FER Room 41	
		Year 8 Attend Club ALI Room 38	Duke Of Edinburgh Support DES Room 7 Week B Only	Year 11 Chemistry Clinic AMR Mobile Week A Only	
		Drama Club MAL Hall	History Film Club KLE Room 6	Year 11 Drama Drop In Session MAL Drama Studio	
		Key Stage 3 Futsal Club	11x/Ma2 Maths Intervention		

			KAD/GAG Gym	ADO Room 4 Week B Only		
			11x/Ma5 Maths Intervention LAB Room 37	Dodgeball Club GAG Gym Week B		
				Year 7-10 Let's Celebrate KHL Room 39		
				Year 9 Teen Tech Awards KHN Library		
				Key Stage 3 Waterpainting Club ELB Room 9		
After school	11x/Ma4 Maths Intervention AUL Room 1	Year 10 Maths Action Tutoring ADO Room 4	Year 10 English Action Tutoring CAR Room 4	Year 11 Textiles coursework Club RAN Room H2	Year 11 Physics and Chemistry Intervention MUJ Lab 3	
	Key Stage 4 Art and Photography Club ELB Room 9	Year 9 and 10 Debate Club KHN Library		Year 10 PE BTEC Booster Sessions DIA/GAG Room 32 Week B Only	11x/Sc3 Science Intervention Lab 4 IQB Week B	
		Leyton Orient Football Club GAG Gym				

Wishing you a great weekend,



Mr. Silk
Headteacher