



The John of Gaunt School

Newsletter

Lots to Enjoy in Year 7

Hello everyone!

We love it here at The John of Gaunt and always want to show off all the great things we do.

The thought of moving to a large secondary school can either be nerve wracking or very exciting, but I have to say our Year 7 students have had a fantastic start to their time at The John of Gaunt. They have had so many successes and experiences over the year and I wanted to let you know of some of the experiences they have had and you can have with us too!

Our mission statement is, 'Excellence everyday' because we want all our students to strive to be the best they can be. We want our students to believe they can flourish both academically and through other opportunities inside and outside the school day to gain the experiences and skills that can enrich their whole life.

Our values are based around three simple but important words, 'Kindness, Positivity and Belonging'. Through these we ensure JoG is a safe place where all students are nurtured and cared. This ensures that they can be happy, self-motivated, confident and believe they can achieve in all aspects of school life.

We believe in all our young people and give them the pastoral care, curriculum and extra-curricular

programme to meet their needs, skills and dreams for the future. We have a great group of students here, that's for sure, and a superb set of dedicated staff providing all these experiences. We love to celebrate all the successes of our students and staff (as your parents/carers will be able to see on Facebook and Instagram). There's nothing I like to do more than chat to students during free time and hear about what they have done that makes them proud of themselves!

I do hope this newsletter will be helpful so that you become more familiar with 'JoG' and what it means to be part of our community. Please do come and visit us anytime. We would be delighted for you to see our school on a normal day so that you can experience our calm, open, caring, nurturing and purposeful ethos.

Choosing a secondary school is a very important decision, but it is a personal one as every child is an individual. I believe our student-centered approach, with positive relationships, high standards, outstanding teaching and exceptional pastoral care ensures every child has the chance for a successful and enjoyable future at The John of Gaunt School. If you would like to discuss anything about the school, or require further support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to meeting you soon!

**Mr Rhodes
Headteacher**



**EQUA Mead
Learning Trust**



OPEN EVENING

Please remember it is our Open Evening on Thursday 9th October from 6-8.30pm. Let all your friends and family know so they can enjoy what The John of Gaunt has to offer.

The John of Gaunt School Trowbridge



Get to know us better by visiting our website, viewing our prospectus or phoning to arrange a personal tour.

Visit our OPEN EVENING

Thursday 9 October 2025
6.00 - 8.30pm

Come along and see what we can offer.



SCAN ME

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We asked current Year 7 students what they like about being at John of Gaunt and they said:

"I like that John of Gaunt is bigger than primary school and that I have more independence here".

"I like it when we have a chance to be a part of the school council and have a chance to say how we think and feel about school".

"I have loved doing experiments in Science and learning how to use the Bunsen burners safely".

"I enjoy having teachers that are passionate about their subject".

"I love that I can save up my reward points to buy useful items and sweets".



Favourite moments of Year 7

"PGL was so much fun, being in the rooms and making new friends was a great experience!".

"I loved the giant swing at PGL, it gave me an opportunity to make friends in a very new way!".

"I loved the Year 7 Christmas Disco, it was so much fun & felt like a great way to celebrate the first two terms".

Year 7 Spanish

In Year 7 our students learn how to give information about themselves, their lives, their opinions and how to find out about other people. They develop their appreciation of other cultures, including learning about their festivals and film appreciation.

this trip was no exception! Activities included a bonfire with marshmallows and tag archery among many more activities. Exploring safe, small towns, such as Boulogne, allowed students to take the opportunity to head off in their small groups without teachers accompanying them. This meant they could complete their town trial and spend some of their euros in the many traditional shops on offer, interacting with shopkeepers in French, of course!

We offer a trip to Spain or France most years and when students get to Year 8, they start to learn French too. We have recently enjoyed a short trip to France during the summer term and travelled by coach and ferry. We stayed in a small family-run chateau where students shared en-suite bedrooms in small groups.

The annual trip provides our students with the opportunity of using the Spanish or French they have learnt in school and applying it to 'real life' situations. It also helps develop their self-confidence, social skills and independence.

The highlights included visiting the snail farm where students tasted the produce and Nausicaa Sea Life Centre. Evening games are always very popular and

Mrs Blyth Director of Learning MFL





Year 7 Step Back in Time for Living History Day



Over 150 Year 7 students at John of Gaunt School took part in the annual Living History Day, immersing themselves in the dramatic events leading up to the Battle of Hastings in October 1066.

Throughout the day, pupils brought history to life by role-playing key events in the story of Harold Godwinson, England's last Saxon king, and Duke William of Normandy. The re-enactments culminated in the dramatic defeat of the Saxons and the crowning of William as the new King of England.

Students had the unique opportunity to handle replica artefacts such as swords, helmets, halberks, and battle axes. Following this, they took part in hands-on battle training. As new recruits to the Saxon army, they learned how to form the famous Saxon shield wall and how to

wield a spear effectively. As the Norman forces charged, the students stood firm and successfully repelled the attack.

The event was organised in partnership with Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre, who provided the professional re-enactor and authentic weaponry. This collaboration ensured an engaging and historically accurate experience.

The day served as a valuable enrichment opportunity for Year 7 students, complementing their studies on the events of 1066 and the shaping of British history. Events like this truly bring the past to life—giving students the chance to not only learn about history, but to experience it first-hand. As one student put it, "It's the next best thing to having a time machine!"



Activities Week



Activities week usually takes place in July and allows Year 7-10 to participate in a range of different activities. Some activities this year include

- Longleat
- Taste of Italy
- Paultons Park
- Bristol Aquarium
- Trip to Bath
- Cinema Trip
- Hiking
- Cray Fishing
- Alpaca Experience
- Steel Pan Drumming Workshop
- Film Making
- Card and Board Games
- Wellbeing Workshops



Year 7 English at The John of Gaunt School



Ovid in the West Country Competition:

We had our most successful Ovid in West Country competition this year, which was organised by Ms Murtagh.

During Term One, we study Greek Myths and welcome all students to take part in our external creative competition. Students are encouraged to enter a creative response to a Greek Myth; this year, we had a drawing of Medusa, a crochet of Odysseus (escaping the Cyclops under the belly of a sheep), and a cake

model of Arachne and Athene along with lots of other entries! Our Headteacher and Librarian judged all of the entries, which were showcased in the Library, and we had a student award nomination as well. Our winners were awarded Amazon vouchers, and our top three students were invited to attend an Awards Ceremony at Bristol University.

We are excited to welcome lots of further imaginative responses next year!



National Storytelling Week



We launched the National Storytelling Week competition amongst our KS3 and KS4 students this year.

Students were invited to write an A4 piece of creative writing about a topic of their choice. All of the entries

were entered into the competition, and each student received individual feedback from Amazon (who were sponsoring the event). We have since created our own John of Gaunt anthology of short stories, which we hope to continue building on next year.



ESU English Speaking Competition – Performing Shakespeare



This is our second year running the ESU competition where students are invited to perform a duologue or a monologue from a Shakespearean play.

We were lucky enough to host all of the schools entered into the competition this year, which was a fantastic evening. Our entrant performed a powerful monologue as Julius Caesar!





Year 7 Residential



All Year 7 have the opportunity to attend our 3 day, 2 night residential, where we look to build new friendships and step outside our comfort zones. We have a huge focus on teamwork throughout this residential which is a skill that can be brought back in to school. Students

have the opportunity to use the zip wire, go abseiling, swing on a giant swing, sing round the fire, give archery a go and try a water activity. Our students this year were great and they are still talking about it now!



News from the PE Department



During Year 7 our students have had the opportunity to compete in a range of events and activities throughout the year. We have Netball, Football, Rounders, Cricket, Rugby and Athletics teams that all include Year 7 players. We have had an area Badminton Tournament

for West Wiltshire that was at Melksham Community Campus. So, there are a range of sports available, both team and individual, for everyone across the year. We look forward to you continuing your sporting journey with us.





Year 7 in the Music Department



In Year 7 you get to experience music in many different forms, not just in the classroom but also outside of class lessons.

In music lessons in Year 7 we teach you how to play the keyboard and many other instruments. When covering instruments of the orchestra, we will teach you the violin and drums. When we move on to covering world music, you will learn the ukulele and steel drums. You also learn how to read music and how to compose your own pieces. We listen to lots of different music from here and all over the world and from the 1600s all the way through to the modern day.

There is also the opportunity to have instrumental and singing lessons at school. Private teachers come in to school during the school day to run lessons with students. We currently have teachers coming in to teach guitar, bass and ukulele, piano/keyboard, drums and percussion, brass, woodwind and singing. If there is currently not a teacher offering the instrument you would like to learn then we will find a teacher who can come in to teach you. If you would like more information please email

Outside of lesson time Year 7s are able to get involved in any of the following activities:

- **Orchestra**
- **Choir**
- **Flute Choir**
- **String Orchestra**
- **Hand Chimes**
- **Steel Pan Band**
- **Samba Drumming**
- **Keyboard Club**
- **Band Club**
- **Ukulele Club**
- **The practice rooms are also open for the students to use at lunch times and after school**

A tradition at The John of Gaunt School is that Year 7 form a mass choir that perform at the annual Carol Concert at Holy Trinity Church. The event is a big part of the school calendar and sells out every year with an audience of 350 people. As well as this event we like to get out in to our local community and take our singers



to sing in local care homes and at different events. Next year we are planning a Battle of the Bands evening. We hold a JoG's Got Talent evening where students come together to perform whether that be music, drama, dance, comedy or any other talent! It is always a fun evening. The audience vote on their favourite act to choose the final winner; however, they are all winners to us! As you progress further up the school you may even get to come to one of our Oscars evenings. Our Oscars evening celebrates students in music, art, drama, photography and textiles departments. The red carpet comes out and the winners are announced from a gold envelope. It is always a really lovely evening, and great seeing everyone dressed up for the occasion.

Students can also get involved in the annual school show. You don't have to 'do drama' to be involved. From a music perspective, students get involved through singing, playing instruments and being part of the tech team. Previous school shows that we have put on have included Out of Power!, Grease, We Will Rock You, Back to the 80s and Joseph. We are currently rehearsing The Wizard of Oz.

As you can see the music department is a busy and exciting part of the school to be in and we love getting new students involved every year. We look forward to meeting you!



PSHE and Citizenship in Year 7



PSHE and Citizenship is to prepare young people for life. Life will have a lot of exciting times ahead but also comes with some risks. These lessons are to prepare our students for the possible risks ahead of them. Year 7 have been looking at risk taking in relation to:

- **Smoking**
- **Diet**
- **Relationships**
- **Drugs**
- **Road safety**

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



How and why do you think these areas could be risky? Our citizenship students have started their campaign as a part of their GCSE work. We are raising awareness of Amnesty International and the work that they do. Amnesty raise awareness of human rights abuses across the world. What rights do you think young people should have? Why?



Geography in Year 7



At The John of Gaunt School, Geography is an exciting adventure where Year 7 students explore the world around them and beyond!

From learning essential map skills to discovering the wonders of the rainforest, finding out more about life in Africa, and investigating our own local area, Geography helps students make sense of the planet and their place in it.

We bring learning to life with engaging lessons, real-world connections, and fun activities that spark curiosity and inspire a love of learning.



Year 7 Drama

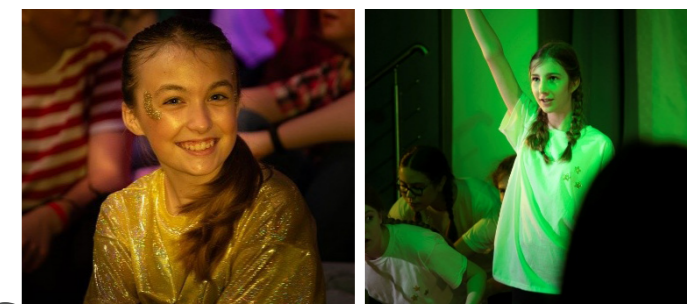


Welcome to Drama! Whether you're a born performer, a behind-the-scenes thinker, or someone just curious to try something new, Drama is a subject that offers something for everyone. At John of Gaunt we'll explore the amphitheatres of Ancient Greece, to the magical world of Harry Potter, from a raucous fairground to a silent-library. Drama is more than just about acting – it's about building confidence, working as a team, using your imagination, exploring new ideas and characters and expressing yourself in creative ways! You don't need to be a "drama queen" to have stage experience. All you need is a willingness to have a go, take part and support your classmates.

There are **many exciting opportunities** for you to get involved in Drama beyond the classroom! Each year, we invite students from all year groups to take part in our **whole-school production** – whether you want to act, sing, dance, help with costumes, or work behind the scenes on lighting and sound, there's a role for everyone. We also run a lively **weekly Drama Club**, where you can have fun, make friends, and explore creative projects in a more relaxed setting. It's a great way to build confidence, develop new skills, and enjoy drama just for the love of it.

Plus, we regularly organise **trips to professional theatres**, giving you the chance to experience live performances – from West End musicals to powerful plays – and be inspired by the magic of the stage.

We look forward to you joining us in the drama studio!





Year 7 Religious Education



Religious Education in Year 7 marks the beginning of a rich and rewarding journey for students as they explore the beliefs, practices, and cultures that shape our world.

At this stage, students are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of religion and its influence on individuals and societies. Through engaging lessons, thoughtful discussion, and interactive learning, Year 7 students begin to appreciate the diversity of religious traditions.

One of the core focuses of Year 7 RE is an introduction to the six major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

Each religion is studied with respect and depth, allowing students to explore the origins, key beliefs, places of worship, holy texts, and significant practices that define each faith. This not only helps students to understand what people believe but also why those beliefs matter to followers in everyday life.



Looking ahead, we are excited to announce some significant developments in the RE curriculum starting from September 2025. These changes will introduce a more worldview-focused approach to Religious Education. While the study of the six world religions will remain an important part of the curriculum throughout key stage 3, there will be a broader emphasis on understanding how religious and non-religious worldviews shape the way people see and respond to the world around them. This updated approach reflects recent thinking in RE and aims to provide students with a more inclusive, balanced, and relevant understanding of belief in the 21st century. By exploring a wider range of perspectives - including humanism - students will be better equipped to navigate a complex and diverse society with openness and curiosity.

Miss Martin (Head of Sociology & Religious Education)



Year 7 Science



Here is a small glimpse at all the amazing opportunities our Year 7 scientists get stuck into from the moment they start.

We start by teaching all the basic skills needed to become brilliant investigative minds, across all three science disciplines, there is plenty to be curious about. They will start by learning all about the tiny particles that make up the whole world around us in chemistry, then all the forces that make the world work. Finally, we will be looking at all the cells and organs that make up all living things.



We have a wide range of different opportunities to get fully engaged in all the practical bits and pieces that make science so great!

Here we have the brilliant Zoolab who our new year 5's and 6's got to see and more importantly meet all the amazing pets!

From a corn snake called Cleo (Held by our Head of department left) to Twiggy the stick insect, there were plenty of creatures to meet - if you're feeling brave enough. We also have a range of opportunities outside the lesson with different trips; as well as our amazing Science club, where our students can join us in experimenting and working together as a team to work out how things tick, not just in our core sciences but engineering, mathematics and even cooking!



Maths Beyond the Classroom



We try to offer students opportunities to enrich their maths and make it more applicable to "real life", this includes entering 100 students into each category of the UKMT Mathematical Challenge.

This is a national challenge with students competing against other schools. This year 3 Year 8 students (pictured to the right) along with a Year 6 student all did brilliantly and qualified for the follow on round of the Junior competition that is aimed at Year 7 and 8. Harrison, photographed on his own, was awarded a Silver Certificate for his exceptional performance.

We offered local primaries the chance to bring their Year 6 students along to the competition, offering an opportunity to their most able mathematicians and 20 Year 6 students came.



Bridge Building



Year 9s experienced bridge building with an ex-student, who is now an engineer with AECOM, when she visited with her colleagues.

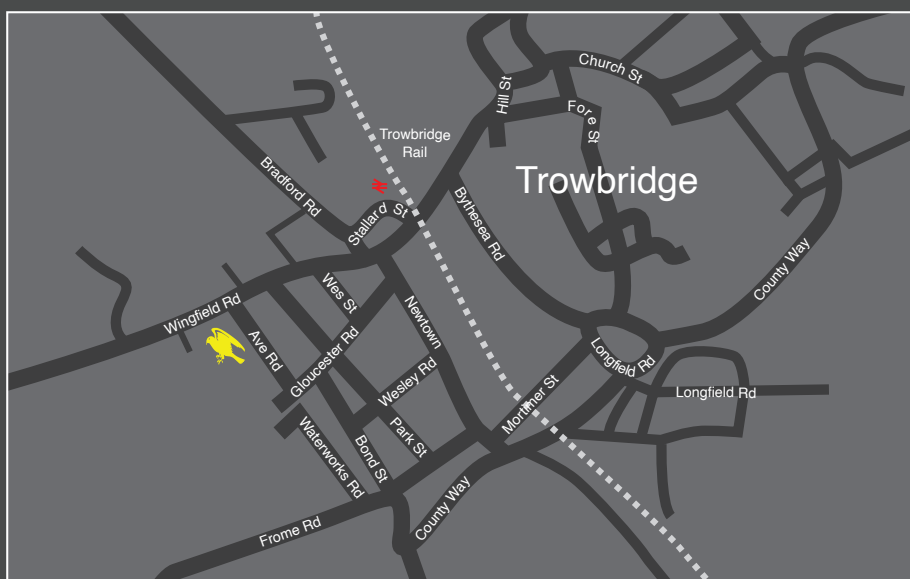
The students worked together, reading and interpreting technical plans, finding the appropriate parts and building the bridge.

The completed structure was 15m long and weight-bearing, with students walking over it.





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