



King Edward's
WITLEY



DECEMBER 2024

LEARNING JOURNEYS

WELCOME

ANTHONY KIRK-BURGESS



I am delighted to welcome you to the second edition of Learning Journeys, the half-termly academic journal for King Edward's School, Witley. Within this edition you can read our pupils' reflections on recent school trips to New York and Oxford University, join us in celebrating successes in mathematics and reading, and find out more about our increasing range of vocational qualifications.

In the evolving landscape of education and employment, vocational qualifications such as those available at King Edward's (BTECs, City & Guilds and Level 3 Diplomas) hold significant academic and practical value, making them an essential part of a well-rounded educational system. These qualifications bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application, preparing pupils for diverse pathways to success. They are underpinned by rigorous assessment processes that develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills, with pupils completing projects, coursework

and assignments that require independent study and application of knowledge.

In the Sixth Form, by embracing these vocational qualifications, we celebrate the diversity of the learning styles, strengths and aspirations of our pupils. The academic rigour of these qualifications ensure they are fully recognised by UCAS, future universities and employers. Our parents can take pride in their children pursuing vocational qualifications, knowing they are gaining both academic knowledge and practical expertise. Pupils should feel confident in the value of these qualifications, understanding that they open doors to opportunities as credible and prestigious as traditional academic routes.

More broadly on the learning and teaching front, my attention this half-term has been on introducing WIN, a school-wide, consistent approach to the provision of excellent verbal and written feedback to pupils and our expectations of the actions they will take in response to this feedback.

Effective feedback is more than just marking; it is a meaningful conversation between teachers and pupils about their learning. It highlights their strengths, identifies areas for improvement, and offers clear, actionable steps to progress further. When done well, it encourages pupils to take ownership of their learning, builds their confidence, and motivates them to achieve their best. Research shows that when pupils understand where they are in their learning journey, what they need to do to improve, and how to get there, they are more likely to make significant progress.



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At King Edward's, we have therefore introduced the WIN approach to pupil feedback, where teachers identify:

W – what went well – the positive aspects of the work being marked

I – improvement – aspects of the work which could have been better

N – next steps – a clear and actionable instruction to the pupil

It is important to note the subtle but essential difference between identifying an improvement (I) and a next step (N). The improvement tells a pupil what they need to work on but it is passive in its nature, whereas the next step explains how to make the improvement and therefore requires action by the pupil. Our parents are encouraged to look out for the WIN acronym in their child's marked work and, more importantly, to support teachers by encouraging their children to complete their next steps!

Anthony Kirk-Burgess

Deputy Head Academic

email: kirkburgessa@kesw.org



TABITHA TAKES HOME OUR READING CHALLENGE TROPHY



Congratulations to Tabitha (2nd form) for triumphing in our Summer Reading Challenge in 2024. Awarding Tabitha the trophy Mrs Harris, our Head Librarian, explained, "our Summer Reading Challenge has now run for 3 years, and was inspired by our wish to encourage the culture of reading at King Edward's. Numerous studies have shown the improvements in young people's well-being gained from regular reading, aside from the academic benefits of reading as broadly as possible. The Summer Reading Challenge is designed to support reading in and out of school, and our pupils' achievements are celebrated each year with a reception where parents are thanked for supporting the Challenge".



Having visited the library as part of her tutor group to choose her summer reading books, Tabitha took on the Challenge with great enthusiasm. She reflected on her summer reading experience after winning the 2024 trophy, "I entered because I love reading, because it transports me to another world where the story is based. I almost feel like I am there as part of the story. Reading is a great way to spend time, it inspires me, and I learn so many things and my creative work becomes easier thanks to my reading. I read many books over the summer holiday, sometimes more than one a day! I did not expect to win, so it was a very pleasant surprise".

As part of the Challenge, Tabitha completed a diary entry and poem based on one of her favourite books 'Anne of Green Gables' by L.M. Montgomery. When asked for her favourite book, Tabitha commented "This is a difficult question because I have read many books I love. It is really hard for me to choose one. I would always say it's the one I'm reading, but then when it's finished, I pick up a new one—and that's my new favourite!"

Summer 2025 will see the next instalment of the Reading Challenge – and we look forward to another friendly competition, and to our pupils' continued enjoyment of reading during this academic year and throughout their King Edward's journeys.



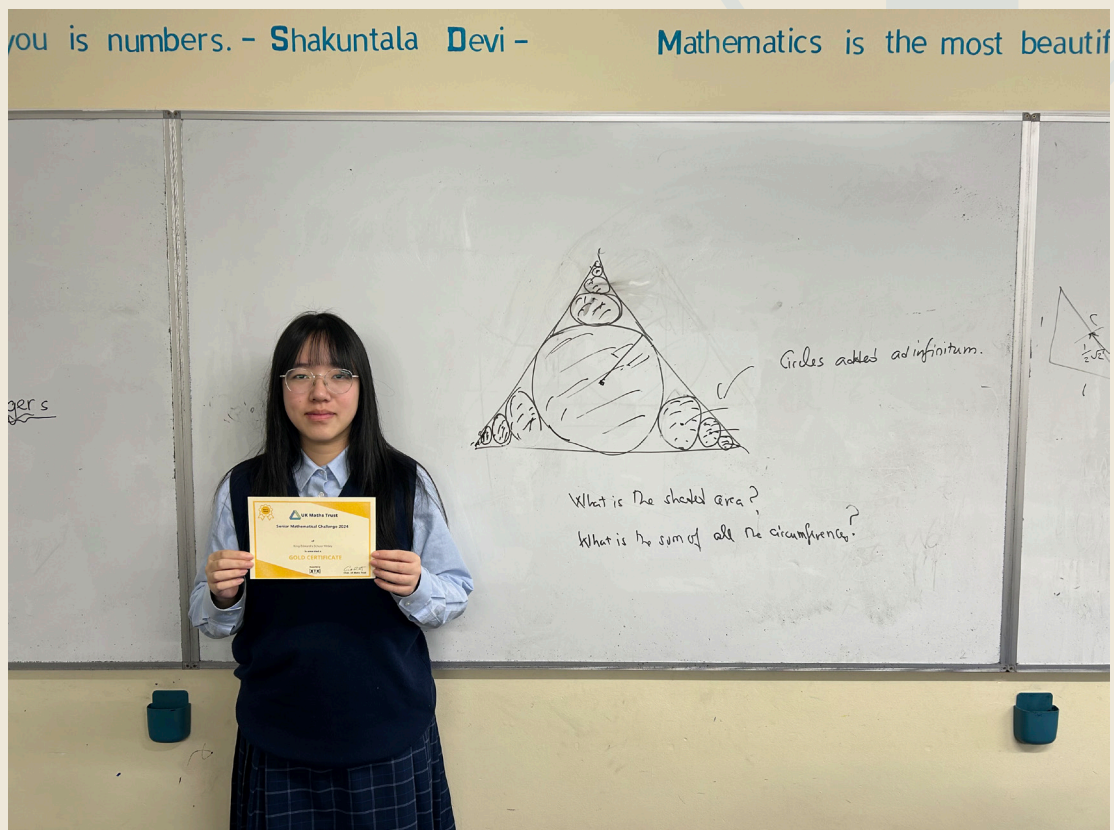
GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE FOR OUR MATHEMATICIANS



Earlier this term, three of our Pre-6th pupils were proud to win awards in the Senior UK Mathematics Challenge. Organised by the UK Maths Trust, the leading British charity advancing the education of young people in mathematics, each year thousands of teenagers take the challenge, originally organised as the National Mathematics Contest in 1961.

The Challenge involves a series of problems designed to require a problem-solving approach to twenty-five different scenarios. Candy, who received a gold award, explained "the Challenge was very tough, with difficult questions throughout. I do really enjoy maths lessons and so testing my knowledge in this way was very rewarding. I was very surprised to have won a gold award, and now I look forward to future challenges of this nature"

Maths teacher Mr Sibachir congratulated our pupils and noted "this prestigious challenge is typically aimed at 6th form pupils, which means Candy, Roy and Catheria's achievements in winning gold, silver and bronze awards respectively whilst studying in the equivalent of fifth form is extremely credible. We are very proud of their achievements – congratulations!"



FINDING INSPIRATION IN OXFORD



"A group of us recently visited Oxford University, renowned for its academic excellence and impressive architecture from various periods in the UK's History. The day was an incredible experience and it reaffirmed my ambitions of studying at this world-renowned university.

We started the day by learning the history of the Bodleian library; founded in 1602 this is one of the oldest libraries in Europe and the second largest in the UK. The interesting styles of

architecture blended meticulously with the old fashioned books that layered the corridors showing off the centuries of knowledge contained within the library.



Whilst wishing I could stay longer, we soon headed off to chat with a current student while admiring the natural greenery at St John's College, one of the 39 Colleges that make up the University. We spoke to a professor and a current student who provided invaluable insights into academic life at Oxford, how to write our personal statements, and generally debunked myths associated with the application process and the University.

We then moved onto New College, which once again was an incredibly inspiring, highly academic atmosphere, and where scenes in Harry Potter were filmed as it characterised an incredibly beautiful gothic chapel. There we gained more insights into the college system and how the University operates. Finally, we stopped at the Christmas markets, which themselves happen in late November because the University, which is so important to the City, breaks up in early December. The markets again showed the incredibly vibrant atmosphere in a city full of life.

Overall, the trip was very motivating for me. Finding out about the culture and the University's centuries-long traditions was fascinating, and experiencing the atmosphere was academically very encouraging. I am now hoping to come back and live in the University and city as an Oxford student".

Kyle, Lower 6th



LIFE AND LEARNING IN NEW YORK CITY



"After a long flight and border control process at JFK airport, we drove through the New York suburbs, spotting many iconically American sights including yellow school buses and the Statue of liberty. Later that evening, we ventured out to the Empire State Building visitor centre and learn more about the development of the building over the years. Upon reaching the building and gazing at the city, I felt a sense of detachment, as if I was observing a miniature world from a bird's eye view. It was a strange and disorienting feeling, knowing that I was observing people going about their daily lives, with them completely unaware of my presence hovering above them, especially when I considered the entirely realistic possibility that someone could be doing the same with us later in the trip.



On our second day we visited the New York headquarters for the United Nations. Our guide highlighted the different objectives of the UN and noted that none of the 192 members of the UN are considered to have fulfilled all of these objectives. He also explained how the continued development of nuclear weapons runs counter to the progress of peace, and how historically as tensions between nations has risen, national spending on nuclear weapons has increased. We discussed how a key goal of the United Nations is to promote communication to reduce tensions and create peaceful resolutions to international conflicts during this very insightful visit.

We also enjoyed a guided tour by a retired Wall Street stock broker; he explained the huge changes in New York from when he worked as a broker in the 1970s to today, highlighting the digital transformation which meant that the historic trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange, full of people shouting at each other, has now been replaced by a near empty space with only a few traders, who are mainly there to reminisce. To illustrate this point, we noted that during the 1980s, roughly 98% of American trading happened in the New York Stock Exchange; now, it accounts for less than 2%.

During our time in New York, we also enjoyed a visit to the Statue of Liberty and more sightseeing time. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity, with the experiences on Wall Street and at the United Nations serving as a very informative educational experience whilst we also enjoyed our iconic monuments and experiences the USA is so well known for. We look forward to our future educational trips during our sixth form".



EXTENDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR PUPILS



King Edward's continues to broaden its academic portfolio, reflecting pupil and parental feedback, in a range of subject areas to allow our pupils to realise their potential via multiple routes at different stages within our school. Teachers from across King Edward's have detailed these developments for our Learning Journeys newsletter.



Our BTEC courses in Music Technology and Sport welcomed their first pupils in September 2024. Nationally, the BTEC Music Technology is accessed by large numbers of learners, and facilitates transitions to music and digital skills oriented courses at University and into the sound and media industries. Mr Mayell, course lead, explained "this course is deliberately broad, with assessment methods allowing pupils with both strong musical backgrounds and more technical experience to access the course and relate their work to their interests and their future aspirations in a wide range of industries. We anticipate strong interest in this course in future, offered in parallel with our more traditional A level musical options".

Mr Woodward joined King Edward's in September as the school introduced the BTEC Sport course, having taught extensively on both BTEC and A level courses. Mr Woodward reflected that "whilst the course is similar in some respects to an A level course, it has a flexibility which allows tailoring to pupils' future plans at University, or in apprenticeships and industry. The BTEC course is assessed via a diverse range of methods allowing pupils the fullest opportunities to shine and provides the basis for their future employment and study, which can include progression in sports coaching and officiating. This flexibility has led to a sharp rise in learners accessing the course across the UK, and we've been pleased with the level of interest from new and existing pupils and their families to date".

Our Level 3 (BTEC/A level equivalent) Diploma in Food Science and Nutrition also launched this September, building on the popularity of our GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition course. Mrs Waldapfel, course lead, noted "the course has theoretical and practical components in equal measure, and as part of their course, pupils will be challenged to design and deliver a three course set menu for a local catering college's restaurant.



EXTENDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR PUPILS



There is a strong focus on food safety and understanding the dietary needs of different age groups within the course, which is reflected in our pupils' aspirations, which vary in wishing to progress in the hospitality and sports nutrition industries. They've also had the excitement of being awarded their own chef's coats this term, and we look forward to seeing them in action in these over the next two years!"

At GCSE level, next September will see GCSE Textiles offered for the first time at King Edward's. Mrs Witheridge, Head of Art, described our new option as "an exceptionally fully immersive, creative course, enabling pupils to work with a very wide series of materials during their studies. The course can provide a springboard to a broad range of careers, including textile design, manufacturing and fashion design. It complements our more traditional GCSE Art course very well and we look forward to welcoming pupils onto both our GCSE courses from next year".

In parallel with these developments in our BTEC and GCSE course portfolios, our Design Technology department has gained the prestigious City & Guilds centre certification after a rigorous accreditation process. Mr Webb, Head of Department outlined the benefits from this accreditation as "we are fortunate to benefit from a fully refurbished DT facility here at King Edward's, which has allowed us to further extend our course offerings. Our first City & Guilds course will be the Level 2 Certificate in Design and Craft, starting in 2025, which the 4th Form will be able to access in an after school club. This will allow our pupils to receive a world recognised qualification in addition to their academic course, and we look forward to receiving many applications for the course next year".

For both current and new King Edward's pupils, these exciting new options will be included in our facilitated course selection process which aims to tailor our pupils' academic journeys at the school to reflect their future ambitions to follow a wide range of future study and careers options. Full information on our academic course provision may be found via www.kesw.org

