



Newsletter



Volume 1

December 2024

Keep on puzzling! Queensmead Maths week

November saw the return of the annual Queensmead 'Maths Week England' event, a competitive week of puzzling activities to stretch even the smartest of minds! Once again, we enjoyed the infamous online escape room "Numbrella", a fun and interactive puzzle split into four missions; the theme this year was an underwater rescue, and as the story unfolds, mathematical challenges have to be solved to unlock the next stage. It was incredible to see so many of our students attempting to complete the mission. More than half got the answer correct and successfully cracked the code!

If an escape room wasn't their thing, there was an opportunity to find the missing link in the 'Sequences puzzle'. The three sequences challenged many students - even the maths teachers struggled to see all three patterns.

Despite this, 2 students correctly worked out the solutions (see image below for the solution) - well done, to Lakshan L in Year 7 and Zaraiya G in Year 10, who will receive a prize for their outstanding effort!

As well as the enjoyment of participating in this national event, all participants receive a certificate for their effort. Congratulations to all students who got involved and we look forward to next year, when Maths Week England will return with even more fun events next November.

Mrs Morrissey, *Teacher of Maths and Numeracy*
Coordinator



Maths Week England 2024
11th-17th November



Can We Solve It?

Can you work out what the next number should be in each of the sequences below?

TRICKY → **33, 43, 43, 46, 62, 24, 23** **95**
Count the letters of each word in the question above.

TOUGH → **3, 5, 11, 17, 31, 41** **59**
2nd prime, 3rd prime, 5th prime, 7th prime, 11th prime, etc.

'NO CHANCE' → **14, 15, 3, 8, 1, 14, 3** **5**
N-O-C-H-A-N-C-E; N is 8th letter of alphabet, O is 15th, C is 3rd, etc.

Unravelling 'Enigma': cracking codes and decrypting ciphers

Despite the cold grey morning, on 27th November, forty students from Year 8 and 9 eagerly set off for Bletchley Park, the historic home of the code breakers, to unravel the mysteries around codes and ciphers.

Upon arrival, the students were split into two groups and taken off on their respective tours of the site. Each group was allocated an extremely knowledgeable tour guide who explained the historical relevance of Bletchley Park in enthusiastic detail, and how crucial it was to the UK government during World War II. We were guided around the site and shown many objects of significance including the memorial to the Polish Air Force, and the office of Alan Turing, who led a team of mathematicians to crack the Enigma machine.



During the trip, we had an interactive learning session with a specialist code breaker, who taught us to recognise and decipher Morse code. We also learnt how to decipher various other codes and ciphers. The highlight was when we got to see an original Enigma machine in action. All of the students were invited to interact with the original machine - at nearly 100 years old, it was such a privilege to be able to interact with the genuine article!



The trip finished with another walk around the site and a visit to the gift shop for souvenirs. A truly inspirational day out.

Mrs Morrissey , *Teacher of Maths and Numeracy*

Coordinator

Exploring the world of Chemical Engineering

On Wednesday 20th November, we welcomed two lecturers from Brunel University, as part of an ongoing initiative to broaden students' understanding of potential career paths in Scientific and Engineering fields. This session focused on the field of Chemical Engineering - a discipline that lies at the heart of addressing some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.



Students were introduced to the vital role chemical engineers play in creating sustainable solutions - from developing cleaner energy sources to designing environmentally friendly manufacturing processes. It was a fascinating insight into how science and technology can solve real-world problems, making a tangible impact on society.

Besides discussing the broad societal benefits of chemical engineering, students learnt about the wide-ranging academic and extracurricular opportunities available on campus at Brunel, and the diverse range of career paths that Brunel's chemical engineering graduates pursue; from

roles in renewable energy and pharmaceuticals to positions in food production and environmental consulting, the possibilities seemed endless. Our visitors also outlined the path our students might take to get there, suggesting A level courses and the necessary personal qualities essential for success in the field, such as problem-solving skills, creativity and resilience.

The interactive nature of the session allowed students to ask questions, explore their own interests, and reflect on their future aspirations. Many left the session feeling inspired and confident about their educational and career paths.

One pupil shared their reflection on the experience:

"Lecturers Paulina and Ximena from Brunel University visited Queensmead School to discuss about careers of Chemical Engineering and to share their expertise. They presented how Chemical Engineering benefits the world environmentally, and gave an insight into the campus at Brunel and what careers their Chemical Engineering students go on to do. The session was both informative and inspiring, and left me with a clearer understanding of what I want to do in the future."

This visit was a valuable opportunity for Queensmead students to broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Brunel University for their time, expertise, and inspiration.

Mr Earle, *Teacher of Maths and Engineering*

Festive fundraising: raising awareness

This half term, Queensmead's Charity Committee has been busy fundraising to support our local community. On Thursday 12th December, we celebrated Save the Children's national 'Christmas Jumper Day', and, thanks to the generosity of students and staff, we were able to raise £382. Save the Children does such vital work to give all children a safe environment in which they can thrive, it was heartwarming to see so many of our students wearing festive jumpers in support.

In addition, we have been preparing the refreshments for the annual Queensmead Winter concert, where we will be serving mince pies and some home baked goods, this time to raise money for the British Red Cross.

In addition to fundraising in school, members of the Charity Committee visited Hillingdon's Food Bank. Somer, one of our P16 committee members, reflects on the experience:

On 8th November, members of our school's Charity Committee went to Volunteer at Hillingdon's Food Bank. It offered an eye-opening experience, a true 'behind-the-scenes' look at how community contributions are organised to support those in need, showing us the vital role that teamwork and volunteer work plays in making a difference.



Upon arrival, the volunteers showed us around the warehouse, which is the first food bank in London, taking us to the different stations set up and how the entire place is organised to allow the sorting process to be as efficient as possible. Seeing the inner workings of the food donation community was eye-opening: "People donate to food banks a lot more than I thought", said Anushka, a Year 8 member of the committee, and we all realised the true scale of the process as we saw so many people in the community coming in to drop off their donations too.

We set to work separating donated items into categories, such as toiletries or pet food, highlighting the range of different products sorted for distribution. Tanisha and Mehar both commented on the meticulous care taken during the process of organising the donations by expiration date, noting how the workers "did so much to stay organised, such as stacking boxes with items with shorter shelf life at the top". Reflecting on the visit, Nelly remarked, "I've learnt that the food bank plays a very important role in the community and they don't give out food to just anyone", emphasising the careful consideration and impact of their work as they form important connections with locals to ensure no one suffers needlessly without receiving help. At the end of the day, the experience allowed me to further understand and appreciate the vitality of community, especially in London, a city where those who struggle could easily feel isolated.

Miss Hornal, *Teacher of History and Charity
Committee Coordinator*

Our love of music lifts local spirits

On Friday 29th November a number of our students from across the year groups went to perform for some of the elderly members of our community, at Brackenbridge House Care Home.



There was a wide range of pieces, and a range of musical styles and instruments, and the audience enjoyed it all immensely, asking for more and enjoying interacting with the young people. We are incredibly proud of our students for their hard work and commitment - they truly are ambassadors for our school.



Mr Taylor, *Head of Performing Arts*



Helping you to stay connected

Our new app, Edulink, is proving to be very successful, enabling us to communicate effectively with parents about student progress, behaviour and notices, while providing students with an easy app for homework and keeping track of their rewards.

If you have not yet signed up to use the app, please do so as soon as possible. We are sending out an email containing all the details you need to login, if you have not yet done so, on 20th and 21st December. Do check your spam folder in case the email gets misdirected.

Follow this link for further information:

[Edulink One - Queensmead School](#)

If you have any difficulties with the app or would like further guidance, contact the school office

office@gmschool.org.uk

Ms S Amin, *School Business Manager*

Building bridges throughout Ruislip

In today's fast-paced world, the importance of community and human connection cannot be overstated. Our outreach program aims to give students a range of opportunities to connect with the Ruislip community. On 6th November, a group of Year 9 students visited Brackenbridge care home; speaking with the residents, they formed meaningful connections and bridged the gap between generations. They read their form reading book, "I am Malala", to the residents, and talked to them about their careers and travels. Some of the students faced challenges when interacting with the residents, as some residents have dementia or physical disabilities, however, their Queensmead values shone through as both students and residents had a wonderful experience. Here are some of their reflections of the experience:

Finn, 9H - *"As soon as I sat down I could tell it wouldn't be easy, but one man next to me was so kind. As soon as we began talking, we didn't stop. This man had so many stories to tell me and it was so interesting to hear about his life experiences. It was a great experience and I recommend that anyone with a bit of time join outreach."*

Leyla, 9H - *"We went on the trip to talk and read to people from the care home in our area. We started off by introducing ourselves, then getting to know who we were speaking with. We read a little bit of Malala's biography, but soon realised that the residents would much rather chat. They told us about their past and all the wonderful things they did."*

We have also been busy conducting Science workshops for local primary schools, for those in Year 6 from Bourne Primary, and Year 4 from Deanesfield School. Learning all about the digestive system, they were able to bring theory to life with a practical, and all students thoroughly enjoyed it. We hope that by continuing these workshops, it will help to bridge the gap between primary and secondary Science curriculums, while giving students an insight about life at secondary school.



In addition, Bourne Primary participated in a Drama workshop, using drama techniques to develop focus, craft characters and structure improvisations. There was such enthusiasm! They took to the stage and performed a range of scenes for each other, developing awareness of audience in live performances and gave insightful feedback to each other on their performance work. We look forward to being able to continue working with such talented and eager actors in years to come.

Mrs Hussein, *Teacher of Science and Outreach
Coordinator*



What's been happening in Design Technology?

What a great year it has been in the Design Technology and Home Economics departments! As we wrap up the winter term, let's take a moment to reflect on all the amazing achievements and projects our students have completed:

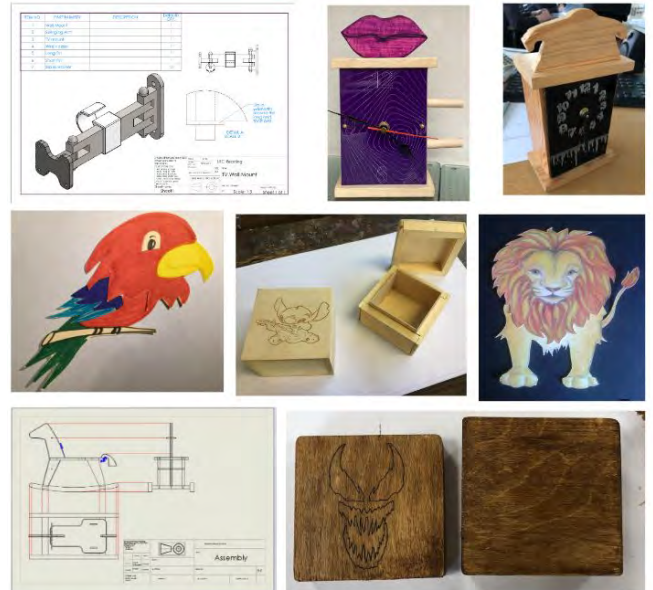
 **Year 7:** our Year 7 students have delved into the world of **materials and workshop tools**, sparking their creativity and developing practical skills right from the start of their DT journey.

 **Year 8:** with some experience of DT now, they have immersed themselves in nature, exploring **biomimicry** as they work with metals, timbers, and CAD and CAM technologies (computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing) to bring innovative designs to life.

 **Year 9:** Year 9 students have had the opportunity to explore **product design** and **graphics** lessons to help them make informed option choices for their future studies.

 **Year 10:** Our Year 10 students have made significant progress towards their GCSE, diving into smart materials, using CAM technologies like laser cutting and 3D printing, while honing their design skills.

 **Year 11:** Across all three courses - Engineering, Product Design and Graphics - students have started coursework and are beginning to produce outcomes for their designs.



Year 12 Engineering

Our students have designed 2D and 3D CAD drawings of a CNC milled (computer numerical control milling) TV wall mounting system as well as a 10-part rocking horse.

Exciting extra-curricular STEM Opportunities!

- Congratulations to Zayd (Year 10), who came 2nd in the Maker Challenge at Imperial College, London: *"For the maker challenge, I am making a device that combats cot deaths. It will monitor blood oxygen levels (to see if the baby stops breathing) and will be connected to a receiver, which will both alert the parents using an alarm but also display vitals, such as blood oxygen levels and BPM. I have created the circuits and written code for the Arduino in C++".*
- Our Engineering students took part in an exciting online webinar, as part of the 'Aspire to Engineer: A.I. and Me' programme, listening to Dr Regina Barzilay from MIT discussing how she uses AI technology to support her work in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

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 Year 9: students have been learning about **hygiene**, bacterial growth and overall **safety** in the kitchen environment. Students put this knowledge into place to make Calzone pizza, a seasonal fruit cobbler and fried rice dishes, whilst maintaining the highest safety standards.

 **Year 10 and 11:** students have made significant progress on their GCSE journey, exploring **macro and micro-nutrients** and developing key technical skills for practicals. They have created a fantastic range of different culinary delights from homemade tagliatelle pasta and a cheesecake.

 A Level: Food Preparation and Nutrition

Across Year 12 and 13, students following the 'Food Preparation and Nutrition' course have been developing their own skills set with increasing technicality. They have been deboning whole chickens and creating shaped breads from scratch. They are learning to dovetail complex recipes with the aim of creating an appetising three course meal.

As we look ahead to another successful year, filled with creativity, innovation and collaboration, we are excited about what lies ahead. Thank you to our dedicated staff, talented students and supportive community for making the start to this year exceptional.

Stay inspired!

Mr Jivan, *Head of Design Technology*



Expanding horizons: what careers are there in Science?

On 7th November, we hosted our very first subject-specific careers evening, inviting students to consider their possible future in Science and the world of medicine. The aim of the evening was to showcase the vast range of careers in medicine that can stem from studying Science, and we were privileged to be joined by seventeen professionals from an array of fields: doctors, healthcare scientists, a toxicologist and an optometrist, to name but a few, all of which took the time to speak to our students about their job and the pathway they took to get there.



It was an incredibly informative evening for all attendees. The external professionals, parents and students were all extremely positive: Dr. Barton remarked that our students were impressive, “well-informed, interested, enthusiastic, attentive and polite.” Dr. Malik appreciated the nature of the evening, commenting that “the informal structure made it easy for students to approach us”.

But this is just the beginning: we are planning a series of similar events. In particular, in the new year, we are hosting an evening on careers in STEM, and a later one, focusing on careers in the Arts. We look forward to seeing you there!

In addition, on the 28th November, we ran an evening event to support our Year 9 students in the process of selecting their Key Stage 4 options. With such important choices ahead, we wanted to provide students and parents with a clear understanding of the available pathways, as students prepare to embark on their GCSE journey. If you were not able to attend or simply want more information, use these links:

- [The options booklet](#)
- [The information presentation](#)

Please note the key dates for choosing options:

- 15/01/25 - students will have a Personal Development lesson on the options process
- 23/01/25 - Year 9 consultation evening
- 29/01/25 - Options fair
- 05/02/25 - Options taster day
- 05/02/25 - Options form opens
- 26/02/25 - Options form closes

Ms Curley, Deputy Headteacher



How does a brand achieve global power? Year 9 investigate...

On 5th December, a group of forty-eight Year 9 students visited Cadbury World in Birmingham. After an early start we arrived at the factory and were welcomed with several bars of chocolate. What a great start to a trip!

The students began with a tour of the factory, learning about the history of the Cadbury family, the brand and how it has evolved over time. After the tour, they were able to visit the gift shop, where many of them stocked up on copious amounts of chocolate.



We then moved onto the 'have a go' zone, where students were able to practice tempering chocolate and doodling their names in liquid chocolate. Later, students visited the 4D cinema which was a great experience and one that the students thoroughly enjoyed.

Finally, the students attended a geography talk; they learned more about how Cadbury is a great example of a transnational company, and it highlighted how such enterprises operate. The students were able to make links between what they had learned in their globalisation unit last year, and draw upon their more recent learning on Superpower nations. It was a fascinating day and a worthwhile experience, enhancing their knowledge of brand identity and the power of a single company.



Cadbury

Ninjas in training! Year 8 reward trip

As a reward for their achievements so far this year, Year 8 students had the opportunity to go to 'Ninja Warrior'. Ana reflects on her experience...

"It was a really fun trip! We left school at around 4pm. Although the drive to and back from the trip was a little long (our coach got delayed by 10 minutes), when we arrived, the delay didn't matter, because there was a lot to do. We were pleasantly greeted by the staff, who were warm and kind to us. They gave us each a pair of socks and a wristband. There was catchy music being played on the speakers, which made it seem more energetic and fun.

There were slides you could go down and a soft rock climb, which was really fun to go on. There was an obstacle where you had to jump from block to block to try and not fall down into the foam pit, which was fun and interesting. There was also a massive air-filled bouncy dome, where you had to try and climb up it and stay on as. It was quite difficult to climb up on it and people kept on sliding off. There was also a bouncy pyramid. Each obstacle was fun and energising, each being different from the next.

As we were driving back, everyone was tired, but happy, and we got back at 6:50pm. I was already thinking about how much fun I had and how I couldn't wait to come back again. It was definitely a school trip to remember."

Ana G, Year 8 student



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A showcase of what we offer at Post 16

On Thursday 14th November, we were delighted to welcome so many students and parents for our Post 16 Open Evening. The vast majority of our current Year 11 cohort were in attendance, along with students from other local schools, and all of them were keen to get an idea of what Queensmead School can offer them for their Post 16 education. Prospective students could visit each department, finding out about each subject on offer, while looking at examples of work and talking to current students about their experiences.

At Queensmead School, we offer a comprehensive Post 16 curriculum, comprising of both A Level and vocational qualifications, meaning we cater for a wide range of students. In the new year, those students who are currently studying with us in Year 11 will be invited to attend a short meeting with a member of the school's Leadership Group to discuss their option choices following on from their upcoming mock examinations.

We very much look forward to welcoming back many of our current Year 11 students into Year 12 in September 2025.



Year 11 compete at a local level

On Wednesday 4th December, eight of our finest Year 11 table tennis players competed in the Hillingdon School's annual table tennis tournament at Oak Wood School.

The quality of table tennis on show was incredible and although we were not able to come out victorious, we did have three students reach the quarter final stage of their respective tournaments. This was a great experience for the students as they look to build their competitive experience of table tennis to assist them with their GCSE PE practical scores. Well done to all of the students for the impeccable way in which they represented Queensmead School.

Mr Briggs, Assistant Headteacher



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Lifting spirits with a musical extravaganza

Without a doubt, since September, we have faced some challenges in school: first, a local power outage, and secondly, unprecedented levels of rainfall, both of which forced us to close the school on two occasions, initiating months of ongoing repair work to our site.



With our main hall and stage out of use, as the flood-damaged floor is replaced, it seemed likely that our end-of-term celebrations would not be possible. However, thanks to the support of our neighbouring primary school, Deanesfield, we are thrilled to have been able to host our annual Winter Concert. By allowing us to use their facilities, we were able to celebrate the end of term with a showcase of the incredible musical talents of our students.

And what a way to mark the end of both the end of term and the end of 2024! We were delighted with a wide variety



of performances - from iconic classics, such as Frank Sinatra's 'Fly me to the moon' and Bing Crosby's 'Winter Wonderland', to more recent hits, such as Adele's 'Chasing Pavements' and the Arctic Monkey's 'I bet you look good on the dancefloor'.

What was otherwise a rather bleak December evening, was noticeably brightened by this spectacle of talent. All year groups were represented, proudly demonstrating our school values of resilience in the face of recent challenges and kindness towards each other, something that was noticeable in the final number - a spontaneous rendition of 'Don't stop me now', by Queen - when all students joined together. A wonderful evening, and a wonderfully uplifting end to the term.

Miss Scott, Assistant Headteacher

