

# Newsletter

CHRISTMAS EDITION | DECEMBER 2020



"I can do all things with the help of God who strengthens me."

**St Edmund's  
Catholic School**

Congratulations to Paige who took part in the GB Target Sprints Championships that took place in October.

Not only did she win a Gold medal, she also smashed her previous best time by 31 seconds to win the Women's Youth (11-16 years) event in 7min 30.35secs.

Target Sprint is an internationally recognised air rifle discipline that combines running and target shooting. Competitors run three laps of a 400m track with two stops in between where they must knock down five targets placed 10m away with only 15 pellets per stop.



## St Edmund's Student wins GOLD

at the GB Target Sprints  
Championships.

Paige is not the only champion in the family. Her brother James (who also attended St Edmund's between 2012 - 2015) came second, winning Silver in the Junior Men's (16-21 years) event with a time of 5min 08.65 secs.

Both Paige and James also entered the mixed pairs event where they took home the Bronze medal.

The sport was initially created by The international Shooting Sport Federation in 2013 and the family became involved when James attended a taster session in 2017 with his local Scouts group.

Paige took up the sport in 2018 after watching her brother compete and she has achieved so much in such a short time.

Well done and we look forward to sharing more of your achievements in the future.



## IMPORTANT DATES

### JANUARY 2021

Mon 4th: INSET DAY (Years 7-10 ONLY)  
Yr 11 Mock Exams

Due to last minute guidance changes by the Government, please see our website for up-to-date information regarding the first week of term: [www.saintedmunds.org.uk](http://www.saintedmunds.org.uk)

Mon 11th: No Triple Science catchup sessions this week  
Yr 10 Creative iMedia Exam  
Yr 10 IT Exam

Tues 12th: Yr 10 BTEC Sport Exam

Mon 18th: Yr 11 Triple Science Day (11T1)

Yr 7 Celebration Assembly  
Tues 19th: Yr 11 BTEC Sport Exam (Resits only)

Thurs 21st: Yr 10 Celebration Assembly  
Yr 11 Triple Science Day (11M1)

Yr 9 Parents Evening (Online)  
Fri 22nd: Yr 11 Celebration Assembly  
Yr 11 Retreat

Tues 26th: Yr 11 Photographs

Thurs 28th: Yr 9 Options Market

### FEBRUARY

Thurs 4th: Yr 11 Parents Evening (Online)

Mon 8th: National Apprenticeship Week

Tues 9th: Yr 8 Celebration Assembly

Weds 10th: Yr 9 Celebration Assembly

Thurs 11th: National Apprenticeship  
Virtual Bus

Fri 12th: Non School Uniform Day

#### Please note:

Any events in school are held within the Government's social distancing and school attendance guidelines.

All events are subject to change as the school will follow guidance issued by the Government in light of the Covid 19

Tel: 02392 823766

Web: [www.saintedmunds.org.uk](http://www.saintedmunds.org.uk)

*Caelum Dives Ingressi*





# HEADTEACHER'S ADDRESS

The end of the term has arrived and has a very deflated feel about it. This, at a time when we should be really celebrating the birth of Christ Our Lord. A joyous event to bring love and light into the world. As we look to the New Year, Christmas can give us yet greater hope, fulfilment and desire for a more normal 2021.

Prior to the last two weeks of the term, we had achieved a huge amount as a family. All of our children had a relatively normal educational experience, and we successfully established new routines and ways of working. Even the introduction of masks in corridors was a smooth transition. That said, it is ironic that we then saw a slow and steady increase in Covid cases. As mentioned in previous communications, a key factor of our rapid spread can be partly attributed to parents sending children in when displaying symptoms (or having a test!). Having spoken to Public Health England countless times, it is now clear that in many children the first symptoms are in fact a stomach ache/headache/diarrhoea and cold/sore throat. Test and Trace are using the date these symptoms appear as the starting point rather than the next stage; which is the onset of Covid symptoms. This combined with the many children who will show no symptoms but carry/have the virus makes it very difficult to identify.

Looking at next term my advice is to check with your child that they are well. If they are unwell at all, they should remain at home and if they present with Covid symptoms they should not attend school under any circumstances and arrange for a test. It is extremely likely that we will need to isolate whole tutor/year groups again until the vaccine is available to us. It is unclear as to when this will be. Prior to that we may hope to see the opportunity for mass student testing and clarification relating to examinations.

In the meantime, we will continue with procedures within school. Students who continue to break the code of conduct in relation to Covid will face severe sanctions as outlined in the Behaviour Policy and updated information. Over Christmas the site will be deep cleaned and fully prepared for students to return in January. Masks will remain compulsory for all staff and students when in the corridors, as will the requirement to 'hand gel' between each lesson.

We must remember how successful the term has been for students. Year 7 have settled in amazingly well. Having playtime just for themselves has been a real luxury for the year group. Other year groups love having their own dining areas and the fact that there are small or no queues for food.

I have seen some amazing homework this half term. We are truly grateful for your support. These habits bode well for KS4 where students are required to stay for 'evening prep' work and then still go home and do homework. At this stage, they must be independent learners if they are to have the success they deserve. Year 10 & 11 have been amazing at this and attendance at evening prep will benefit individuals massively when they reach the summer exams. I expect the enthusiasm of Year 9 to continue as we move closer towards Option choices. The 'Roadshows' have certainly helped with starting to shape decisions. This comes to fruition when in Year 11 students are starting to apply to colleges. Our Mock Interviews have certainly helped many Year 11 students 'get into gear' for their interviews. The Year group that has impressed me massively is Year 8 - who, having had a disturbed start to life in St Edmund's, have slotted straight back in.

Our aim in January is to build upon this and continue to give our children an outstanding education, spiritual journey and as many new experiences as we can. The spiritual life of the school and our children is something we cannot sacrifice during this pandemic. The tutor Masses, retreats, daily prayer and meditation can never be just an add on and remain integral to our family life.

Thank you for your support. The many messages we have had from parents have touched us and refuelled the love and energy we all need to get through. For any families or individuals who are struggling, please contact the school and we will do all we can to help. By supporting one another we will come through this stronger and with deeper faith.

Finally, Congratulations to my PA, Ms Slight who has just received her 25 years of service award to Portsmouth City Council. Well done on this amazing achievement.

Merry Christmas



Mr S Graham  
Headteacher



# 5 Steps to Stay Calm and have a Happy Christmas!

Over Christmas this year, many of us will feel anxious or stressed for a range of different reasons. For example, you may have your mock exams coming up after Christmas, or may feel stressed due to Covid-19. Many people tend to feel stressed in the weeks leading up to Christmas and panic to get the last preparations done, and with everything that's happened this year, most people will be feeling very worried. So, here are five ways to stay calm over Christmas this year:

1- The Finger Trace, spread one hand wide and use the other to trace over each finger. When you go up on side, breathe in and when you go down the other, breathe out. Try doing this if you feel anxious, it's silent and unnoticeable, so no one will ask what you're doing.

2- Counting, this may sound boring or stereotypical but by counting slowly to 10 you draw your attention to something else, that isn't stressful. It'll also help make you focused so you can find a solution to the problem at hand.

3- Go to your happy place, this technique involves a lot of imagination so be prepared for that. If you're feeling stressed sometimes the best thing to do is imagine that you aren't there. It sounds difficult but has actually proven very useful to a number of different people in stressful situations. You simply need to imagine you're doing what you love, that you're in your "happy place". This is a great way to calm yourself down and will draw your attention to something else, even if it's for a second. You don't need to close your eyes either, you simply need to focus on something and imagine you're in your happy place.

4- Leave the situation. If possible, leave the situation that's making you upset. By doing this, you give yourself time to think and breathe, or talk or do whatever makes you calm. Then, when you feel ready, you can step back in and try again. Some good places to go in school if you're feeling this way is the Chapel, as you can always talk to Fiona about what's stressing you out, if possible the Library, as it's always quiet in there and the Trinity Suite. Trinity is a great place to go to as it is always full of things to make you happy, there are books on all sorts of things but most importantly, people to talk to. Most people who go to Trinity are in a similar situation so you can help each other out. If not, Miss Yung and Miss Layburn are in Trinity to offer a helping hand. If you're at home, try going for a walk (if you're not self-isolating) or go where no one else is. If you can't, try going to your happy place.



5- 777. 777 stands for in for 7, hold for 7 and out for 7. This is a standard relaxation technique but one of the most effective. You breathe in for 7 seconds, hold for 7 seconds and breathe out for 7 seconds. You repeat this for as many times as needed, but I recommend at least 5 times. 777 directs your focus to your breathing and is a great way to calm down.

There are many ways to stay calm, and I have only mentioned five. So, if you need any extra guidance, come to the Trinity Suite during school or contact school for advice. Many people worry that the Trinity Suite is a place for teachers and adults to learn your secrets when, in reality, the Trinity Suite is a place to calm down and get help when you need it.



Stay safe over Christmas, and stay calm.  
Molly



## A Huge Thank You

The InSight community has been meeting since May 2016 at the **St John's Cathedral**. We welcome anyone who feels marginalised in society maybe because of mental health issues, addictions or homelessness. Our guests take part in a variety of activities and share a homemade hot meal.

Sadly, COVID19 has prevented our community meeting in the above foremast. However, we have adapted and now provide a hot takeaway meal twice a week for the vulnerable members of our community. We also provide food parcels and telephone support during these difficult times.



**The very generous donations of food from families at St Edmund's will enable us to continue this valuable work well into 2021.** Both the volunteers and guests want to say a huge thank you for your kindness. Sue Cregan





# CHAPLAINCY

It has been a very different Advent season this year, with everyone across the whole world coping with the COVID Pandemic. Within St Edmund's School I have seen how everyone has worked together for the good of all. I have seen the 'joy' that Pope Benedict alludes to with everyone supporting one another and enjoying the simple things in life.

**Pope Benedict said: 'This is the real commitment of Advent: to bring joy to others. Joy is the true gift of Christmas, not expensive presents that demand time and money.'**

During our Year 7 Tutor lunchtime masses, I have seen students entering enthusiastically into their Mass preparation and really trying to understand the Gospel through Lectio Divina. On the 27<sup>th</sup> November, Fr Elijah said our lunchtime Mass in our school Chapel, our Mass intention was united with Bishop Philip Egan, as he offered a 'Day of Prayer and Fasting for an End to the Coronavirus Pandemic' which was held in the Cathedral. During our Mass, we too prayed for the those who are sick, for the NHS care workers and for our world. On this day, the school began with a prayer, uniting ourselves with the Bishop's prayer day.

Our Advent assemblies focused on 'love and being there for others'. We reflected upon our lives; on where we have not truly loved, and perhaps been selfish and not thoughtful of others or our environment. We took time for reflection and preparing our hearts for Jesus' coming. Jesus came out of love for us.

**As Desmond Tutu said, "Do your little bit of good where you are, it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."**

Our Vincent De Paul are a source of energy, joy and commitment throughout all year groups. We have five St Vincent De Paul Groups within the school; a Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and Year 11 group. We used to meet as one group but because of the bubbles and distancing we formed 5 smaller bubbles. These groups have been a power house for the various spiritual activities within the school and each group meet every week to pray and plan various events. Our Year 7 St Vincent De Paul group are the newest edition and helped to put up the Christmas tree decorations, it was a real joy to see their enthusiasm in making the school hall look festive for all.

Our charitable works focused on: the whole school collecting Harvest food for St Simon's Church, which filled our school minibus, raising money for CAFOD during October and for St Vincent De Paul, for packages for the homeless. For Christmas we supported Caritas InSight. A group of people working in St John's Cathedral are involved in this Charity. We encouraged everyone in school to bring in non-perishable foods so that we could donate to Caritas InSight, who were putting together food parcels for people who may need support over the Christmas season. Many, many thanks to staff, students and parents for your generosity. Once again bringing some joy to others.

During this Advent season we prepare for the coming of Jesus, the third candle that we light on the Advent Wreath is 'Joy'. During these times in our homes, communities and around the world there are



difficulties because of the pandemic but let us pray that we can be a source of joy for one another through the simple acts of kindness and love that we can offer to each another.

Thank you to students, staff, parents and the wider community for your support.

I wish you hope, health and happiness during this Christmas season.

My prayers, Fiona Chaplain





# *Year 9 Retreat - Meditation - Prayer - Reflection*



During this term, Year 9 had their Retreat. Each Tutor Group had a Retreat Morning with myself and Mrs Brand in the Chapel. We had time for reflection, various ways of praying, a quiz, meditation and lots of fun. It was wonderful to see our lovely Year 9 students entering into various workshops and enjoying themselves. It was evident through their smiles, prayers, participation and appreciation.





# Year 7 Mrs Feliks-Matthews



Another day, another, week, another term and here we are..... getting ready for Christmas Celebrations. Time has certainly flown here in St Edmund's. No doubt, a very different term to what we usually have here in St Edmund's this time of year, however we have certainly embraced every opportunity given to us, and still managed to have some fun. Let me start this newsletter by commending you all on ..... a few things, actually.

First of all, attendance, which has been absolutely unbelievably good, considering the circumstances, time of the year, weather, Covid and anything else we usually blame for not attending. During my whole professional career, I have never had a year group with such high attendance. I do know however, how hard it is to come to school sometimes when you are not feeling well, but you have shown an incredible resilience and motivation by attending so beautifully every day and on time. My huge thank you goes to all parents and carers who ensure the children are in every day.

Secondly, homework. Year 7 have produced some fantastic pieces of homework and I am so impressed with their **efforts and enthusiasm. Some students have been called to the Headteacher's office to share their outstanding** work with Mr Graham and Mr Wilkinson. Well done to all!

If you are struggling completing homework, please remember that On Thursdays after school, there is Year 7 homework club, which you are welcome to attend. Also, writing your homework tasks and deadlines in your diary, will certainly help you with organisation and handing it in on time.

Please remember that your homework score plays a huge part in your Personal Qualities total, which contributes towards the overall year group ranking revealed during our Celebration Assembly. The other criteria are: Effort, Being Prepared for Learning, and last but not least, Behaviour. I am already very excited for our very first Celebration Assembly, where no doubt a fair share of badges, certificates, prizes will be given out. Please remember, you are a beautiful year group full of gifts and talents, which I cannot wait to see grow over the next few years. I am also very pleased to say, that as the time goes on year 7s are maturing into well behaved, caring and considerate young individuals. As you are aware by now, Mrs Feliks -Matthews forever goes on about kindness and respect, and you have certainly showed plenty of it this term. Your participation in our Year 7 Retreat, **Tutor Masses, St Edmund's Day and in every day of your school life, proved just that. On that note, I hope you have enjoyed our St Edmund's Day treat-DONUTS!** I think you all have judging by the photos.

Our Chaplain Fiona cannot praise you enough for your participation in her Chaplaincy and St Vincent De Paul groups. Your enthusiasm and generosity are also much appreciated. Each Year 7 tutor group have successfully **raised funds to purchase their Tutor Group Icons, which at the end of your time here in St Edmund's will be** displayed on the Icon Wall in DRA. It seems like light years away, but you will be VERY surprised how quickly the time goes.

I am immensely proud of you all Year 7. Thank you for being wonderful and making my job a pleasure.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas! Please enjoy and stay safe!







# Year 8 Miss Holt



Hello all. Firstly I would like to start by saying a huge thank you for all of your support in what has been a challenging half term, especially towards the end. I have been so impressed with the students approach to learning from home and they have once again demonstrated such resilience to adapt to the situation.

We commenced the half term with our additional celebration assembly. This was a lovely, and much needed opportunity to recognise the fantastic start to the academic year students have made! It was a shame we **couldn't have parents/carers with us, however the event was just as joyful and highly anticipated and as ever,** they did me proud! The assembly included a beautiful musical/dance performance from Kirsty Egan, Faith Clarke, Isabella Scott and Tayler O'Reilly. **I unfortunately only had room for one performance and the spot was allocated on a first come first serve basis...I was not anticipating the amount of interest and had a que down** the corridor! It is safe to say that we are a very gifted year group full of budding performers!

This half term students from across the school participated in The Catenian Public Speaking Contest, a celebrated and prestigious speaking competition which is recognised nationally. The English department have **emanated its success here at St Edmund's with all year groups taking part by standing on stage and delivering** a prepared speech, on a topic of their choice, to 3 judges. The speech must be exactly four minutes and is scrutinised using a rigorous mark scheme - ultimately giving a champion for KS3 and KS4. A massive well done to the following year 8 students who took part; Maja, Olivia, Sophia, Melody, Hannah and Olivia.

I would like to end by wishing you all a very merry Christmas and I hope you get to spend time and celebrate with loved ones. I appreciate all of your ongoing support and look forward to continuing to work together with you and welcoming the students back in 2021!





# EDITH STEIN PARTNERSHIP

The Edith Stein School's partnership came together this term to create a sung Blessing for all our schools. Pupils all learnt the song "From Whom All Blessings Flow" and then recorded their individual parts.

These were put together in a video bringing together pupils from many different schools.

The video can be viewed here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb7NyWO7M\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb7NyWO7M_M)

Thank you to Giulia, Milly, Kirsty, Taylor, Faith, Isabel & Faith for all your hard work and commitment to the project.



QUESTIONS

**Q&A**  
ANSWERS

with  
**BEN CLOSE**



On Thursday 26th November a group of 20 Year 9 pupils were lucky enough to be given the opportunity to join a live question and answer session with Portsmouth FC player, Ben Close.



The session was aimed at promoting mental positivity and planning for the future. The pupils were asked to come up with some questions prior to the session, and Ben was massively impressed with the quality and diversity of the subjects he was asked to talk about. These ranged from how he had coped during the first lockdown, how he had managed to keep his fitness up and how he had remained healthy and active to how he had got on at school and which subjects he had struggled in. Ben was really honest with the pupils and kept on reminding them that it is great to have dreams and ambitions to be the best footballer or athlete you could be, but that it was equally important to have a back up plan and that by knuckling down and working your hardest in school, this would give you the best possible life chances.

"I really loved taking part in the question and answer session with Ben Close. It was nice to realise that even though he is a famous footballer, he still had the normal struggles and worries when he was at school. It was also good to think about **having a back up plan.**"

I was hugely impressed with the Year 9s during this session. They listened intently with respect and asked some really insightful, intelligent questions.

Mrs Halford





# HOMEWORK



*Well done!*



Despite everything, the students have continued to produce OUTSTANDING homework this term, from erupting volcanoes to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre made from cakes. Well done everyone for all your hard work!





# Year 9 Mrs Brand



Year 9 have really impressed me this term, coming back and really focusing on their behaviour for learning. Year 9 is a really important year as we have our option choices to make, please ensure your children don't worry about this as we will help and guide them along the way as will you as parents/carers also.

I know this has been a difficult year for all, which made me very pleased and proud to give Year 9 an extra celebration assembly as they totally deserved it. It was a shame not to have the parents/carers there though. Our next one is going to be in February 2021 and I look forward to again praising the children that are working so hard.

We managed to do most of our tutor group retreats, before unfortunately, having to send the children home. These were so lovely to be involved in and I would personally like to thank our Chaplain, Fiona for organising such a wonderful morning of pilgrimage, prayer, quiz and dancing, it certainly brightened my day. The children were so engaged and amazingly well behaved throughout, every single child that took part did so 100%.

9 Romero recently did a tutor assembly, which all tutor groups get a chance to do and I love watching them as seeing their confidence grow and the talents they have. I would like to share with you a poem, written by Marinela, as the year group know unkind behaviour is not ok and Kindness is so important.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas, stay safe and see you all in the New Year!

## Bullying

Three simple words,  
Winged as doves,  
Take flight from her phone  
After elongated months  
They soar through the window blinds  
Shut, tighter than eyelids.  
Slowly eclipsing after every day.

The jungle of blankets,  
Weeping over the beds edge.  
Are nothing  
Resembling the sheets of melancholy  
Suffocating him  
Mother and father oblivious  
Full of unknowing  
Of this seasons bullying  
Encasing her inside the blue  
Familiar cocoon of his room

Her joy abundant for thirteen years,  
Is shattered, erased, stolen, reduced  
to zero  
Keeping vigil  
Even the stars  
Full of dreams and aspirations  
Have come unglued

Like a butterfly emerging from a  
cocoon  
Breaking through  
She is emerging  
A crowning like no other

"I'm going to school"  
Three words thought never to be  
uttered  
Harked the angel after the strife.







# Year 10 Mrs Were - Year 11 Miss Hammond

**Well this has been a Half Term that none of us could have predicted! Our new "normal" continues it seems with pupils in and out of school and returning to live lessons working remotely from home. I am currently writing this having just returned to school following a period of isolation myself ... only to return to zero pupils as you are all now at home learning instead!**

Our online lessons, as much as they are not an ideal way of learning, will be crucial in ensuring that we do not fall behind. Particularly with our Mock Exams fast approaching, and the knowledge of GCSE exams pending this summer.

**I am really looking forward to us all returning in January after Christmas and New Year, here's hoping for a more stable 2021.** I am particularly looking forward to our Year 10 Celebration Assembly in January, our first experience of the Eddie Awards! A wonderful opportunity for us to reward a huge number of individuals within the year group as well as tutor groups with a bit of healthy inter tutor competition!

At this point in the year I want to give a huge congratulations go to the below pupils from each tutor group for achieving the highest number of commendations in Year 10 so far this half term:

Devereux: Emmanuel & Jessica

Kolbe: Joseph & Nadia

Romero: Thomas & Jack

Stein: Sullivan & George

Damien: Milli & Bethany Holloway

JohnPaul: Alex & Jennifer

Newman: Zak, Ethan & Tayla

Teresa: Layton & Mia

And AN EXTRA SPECIAL mention to the below individuals who have already achieved their Silver Commendation award and badge, reaching 70+ commendations: Zak and Sullivan

I wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas break. Please ensure you stay safe and keep in mind the things we have learnt throughout 2020.

**How is it already Christmas? We are already over a third of the way through our final year here at St Edmund's. Such a scary thought! Year 11 however have continued to amaze me. I really didn't think they would be able to impress me anymore but I was very very wrong. Without question they truly are the best year group in the school, well I certainly think so but perhaps I am biased.**

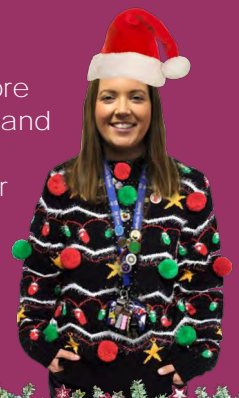
It has been non-stop this half term with college applications and interviews taking place. I think nearly every student has applied for at least two colleges, if not more! They have been very mature about this, coming to ask for help when they need it. Having to constantly remind them it is okay not to know what your future will hold at this stage and then speaking to others that have their whole lives planned out. Makes me feel very unorganised! Lots of them have had practise interviews with myself, Mr Graham, Mrs Halford and Ms Prowse which has been unbelievably helpful! Fingers crossed they are all accepted onto the courses they want to do in the new year.

**We were also meant to have had the mocks this half term which would have been Year 11's first real experience** of sitting multiple exams in the hall. Covid unfortunately had other plans and so this had to be postponed.

**As always the Year 11's took this as they do with all unexpected events, maturely. I know lots of students have** been very stressed as now more than ever the importance of mocks has been highlighted but all we can ask is that they do their best. I know they will spend much of the Christmas holidays now having to revise for the mocks on our return after Christmas but I hope they do still have a rest and enjoy the time with family and friends.

I want to say a big WELL DONE to all of Year 11. They have dealt with an awful lot this term. Extended days, Parents evenings, new prefect responsibilities, college applications and much more all whilst dealing with the national pandemic we as a school have faced. Thankyou to all parents and carers for your continued support this term also. Without the amazing partnership with parents, students and school this would not be possible and I am very lucky to have such an amazing year group who truly make every day at school memorable.

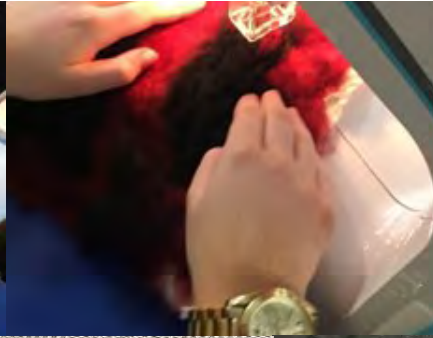
I hope you all have an amazing Christmas, albeit most likely celebrating in a different way but remember to stay safe and look back on 2020 as a year we will all remember.





# TEXTILES

The Year 10 GCSE Textile students are currently in the middle of their Architecture project and are currently making their final piece. Throughout the autumn term, students have been creating samples from a variety of different workshops and learning a wide range of textiles techniques. This mini project will continue until Christmas when they will be moving onto their major project, The Natural World.



Within KS3 Textiles students are half way through their second technology roundabout.

Year 7 are currently working on a bugs and insects themed bunting and are experimenting with techniques such as foam print and hand embroidery. Students have shown excellent understanding of design theory and created some creative and colourful foam printed flags.

Year 8 students are currently working hard on their Marine Panels. They are currently learning Textiles techniques such as Applique and Couching to add embellishment to their work.

Within year 9 students are currently adding textiles techniques to their fairs, carnivals and circus themed cushion cover. They have just completed the technique Batik where they have learnt how to draw with wax.





The Staff, Governors and Students would  
like to wish you a  
very Merry Christmas and a  
♫ Happy and Peaceful New Year.

