



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL



UOB SCHOOL

NEWS

AUTUMN EDITION 2025 | ISSUE 17



CONTENTS

Message from the Principal	1
Celebrating 10 Years of UoBS	2
Our Alumni	3
Aspiring Medics	5
Exploring STEM Careers	5
Exploring Nuclear Frontiers	6
Launching Curiosity with Astrophysics	7
School Winter Concert	7
Unifrog - Explore Your Future Pathways & Career Options	8
Understanding Urban Deprivation	9
A Smashing Victory!	10
Year 12 Work Experience: Politics	10
End of Year Awards	10
Sports Tour 2025	11
Enrichment Highlights	13
Mathematics Marvels	14
Foodbank Donations	14
In Other News...	15
Learning Together, Leading Together	16
Year 10 Work Experience	16
The Book Nook	17
Future Writers 2025	18
Wordplay Festival	18
NEW! Spotlight on Success: Your Stories Shared...	19
Term Dates & Useful Contacts	20
Safety Over the Festive Season	21

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents, Carers, and Friends of the School,

It is my pleasure to introduce this edition of 'UoB School News' – Autumn 2025. As ever, the collective determination across our School community to put in place the best education and development for our young citizens, shines through. I am grateful to each of my colleagues for their care, expertise, and professionalism – together we are greater than the sum of our parts. I appreciate also the strong and purposeful working partnerships we hold with our parents, carers, and family members. In its absence the successes, accomplishments, and potential of our children would surely be diminished.

We continue our institutional journey to establish exceptional all-round provision, standards, and thus outcomes. I have always been and remain an advocate of excellence – to aim lower or accept less limits the possibilities we lay open for pupils, students, and staff. Of course, excellence takes hard work, perseverance, and intent. I observe these characteristics daily and with delight – and at the end of this busy term typified through this newsletter.



The Principal, Colin Townsend, with Vice Principal, Arthur Reeves, Buckingham Palace (May 2025)

As our term draws to a close, I would like to pay tribute to staff members who will be moving on from the School, stepping into their next life-chapters or professional opportunities. We bid farewell to Mr Kevin Cobane, from our nurture team, Miss Esmat Hemraj, from our languages team, and Mr Arthur Reeves, from the senior team. I am truly appreciative to each for their respective contribution to our School over time – sharing the skill of building positive, supportive, and caring relationships with pupils, and an essence of wanting the best for each. We wish them every happiness in their next steps.

On a personal level to Arthur I express gratitude for the part he has played across seven years of senior leadership on my team – including over time focusing on SEND and inclusion, pupil progress, assessment, and curriculum. He is a person of unwavering integrity, and I am grateful for his positive, caring approach and service.

To build capacity at senior level at this time of change, I welcome the following colleagues to the senior team as Associate Senior Leaders: Miss Rachel Dunne, Mrs Anna Graham, and Mrs Katie Tennant who will retain their core roles as Year Leaders or School Business Manager alongside contributing at strategic level to the leadership of the School. I wish all satisfaction from their expanded roles.

At the start of January, an annual point of renewal, we shall continue with our ambitions. This includes in particular the support and challenge for our current Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students – with sights set on aspirational personal excellence. Through diligence and drive, alongside thoughtfulness for their peers I encourage each individual to grow in character and prepare well for examination success ahead. In so doing, dreams known or yet to be discovered, can become a reality with confidence.

In the meantime, and at this time of year, individuals, families, and communities seize an opportunity to slow a little – to rest, to reflect, to recharge – and to connect with those nearest and dearest to us. Wishing you Season's Greetings, a blessed Hanukkah, and a peaceful Christmas.

Colin Townsend
Principal

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

2025 has been a landmark year for the University of Birmingham School.

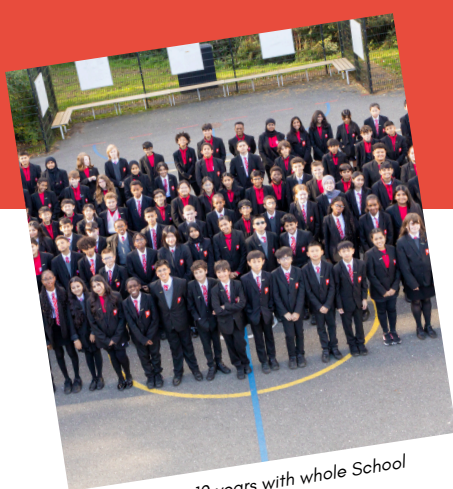
We have been thrilled to play a part in the University's 125th anniversary celebrations, including the recent festive light show on campus, which showcased the pioneering and innovative research undertaken by academics that is impacting lives locally, nationally, and globally.

This year also marks a significant milestone of our own as we celebrate ten years since opening our doors to pupils and students in 2015. Over the past decade, we are immensely proud to have welcomed more than 3,400 pupils and students into our School community.

To help us stay connected with pupils and students after they leave UoBS, we have launched a new alumni network and have been busy collecting memories from our graduates, many of whom have been sharing updates about their journeys since leaving school. These stories bring us great joy and pride, and we have enjoyed sharing them with our current pupils and students during enrichment sessions and on displays around the School.

To commemorate our first decade, we have taken photographs of each year group and members of staff with a view to creating a picture montage in School. We hope pupils and students have enjoyed being part of this special moment in the School's history.

We were delighted to welcome alumnus Jeremiah back to UoBS for our Sixth Form Open Evening last month. In an inspiring speech, he shared his career pathway after leaving UoBS in 2019. Jeremiah is now thriving in a Finance graduate program, and is working towards his CIMA qualification to become a Chartered Management Accountant.



Marking 10 years with whole School Year Photos



Alumnus, Jeremiah inspiring Year 11 at our Sixth Form Open Evening



Attending UoB's Christmas on Campus festivities to celebrate the University's 125th Anniversary

Over the next few pages, you will find snapshots of our alumni and their reflections on their time at UoBS. These stories highlight the varied pathways our graduates have taken over the years.

As part of our birthday celebrations, we have created a special '**Celebrating Ten Years of University of Birmingham School**' book showcasing our journey so far. [You can access the book here.](#)



Did you attend UoBS and have a story to share? We would love to hear from you! Stay in touch with us and sign up to our [Alumni Network here.](#)



UOBS MEMORIES: OUR ALUMNI

JERRY - UoBS Graduate 2017

Dentist in Sydney, Australia

"The most impactful experiences at UoBS were the enrichment activities which provided opportunities for me to gain lots of new skills such as learning Japanese and taking part in military fitness. The range of enrichment experiences taught me to be adventurous, to go out of my comfort zone and explore different extra-curricular activities, as you don't know what skills and lessons you're going to learn from them."



ARCHIE - UoBS Graduate 2022

Undertaking a Postgraduate Diploma in Law (PGDL)

"My time at UoBS played a big role academically and personally. Academically, it enabled me to think critically, manage my time effectively, and develop a strong work ethic. Personally, it helped me to build confidence in my abilities and allowed me to learn and collaborate with other students from varying backgrounds, broadening my perspective. My favourite memory was visiting Parliament with my A level Politics class."



HAYYAN - UoBS Graduate 2021

Co-founder & CEO of Brokerfy Recruitment

"After leaving UoBS, I went on to study Law at the University of Salford in Manchester. UoBS encouraged an environment where character development mattered just as much as academic success. That emphasis helped me form a strong personal ethic - one rooted in integrity, hard work, and a desire to contribute meaningfully to society. Whether I'm working with clients, mentoring candidates, or leading my team, I can trace many of the values I act on today back to the culture and ethos instilled at UoBS."



BILLIE - UoBS Graduate 2020

Paramedic

"Character education played a big role in helping me become who I am today. It gave me the tools to reflect, set goals, bounce back from challenges, and understand the importance of qualities like respect, empathy, and integrity especially in the line of work I'm in. In my role, I rely on compassion, empathy, resilience, determination, and teamwork every single day. These virtues aren't just useful - they are essential. Whether I'm treating a critical patient or comforting someone in distress, these values guide how I act and respond in every situation."



UOBS MEMORIES: OUR ALUMNI

ALEX - UoBS Graduate 2022

Studying Video Game Development

"I am currently studying Video Game Development at Birmingham City University which is my overall passion. My aspiration is to become a Technical Designer or a Game Play Programmer. My time at UoBS helped me to grow and encouraged me to become a student with drive and determination to work hard and succeed and to understand that the harder you try the more you achieve. It steered me towards my niche, and I realised early on that Computer Science was going to be my subject."



AMY - UoBS Graduate 2018

Resident Doctor

"I enjoy being a doctor because it allows you to make a difference to patients when they are unwell and often at their most vulnerable. It is really rewarding to hear and see the positive difference that you can make to someone's life. During enrichment at UoBS, I volunteered in a local charity shop every week and this helped me to develop skills in team working, timekeeping, communication, and organisation. This experience really helped me to grow in confidence and I believe it equipped me with the skills and experience that I needed to get into medicine and become the doctor that I am today."



MEGAN - UoBS Graduate 2017

Primary School Teacher

"At UoBS, I chose to volunteer at a primary school for enrichment, and I absolutely loved working with the children in a school setting. After Sixth Form, I studied Primary Education for three years at Newman University which included three school placements. I currently work in Edgbaston and teach primary aged children Maths, English, Science, Geography, History, PSHEE, RE, Computing, and Forest School. I really enjoy working with the staff and children at my school."



HEPH - UoBS Graduate 2024

Studying Creative Digital Media

"Going to UoBS helped me discover certain things about myself that I have been using further as I navigate life. Looking back, I would say that my most impactful experiences were fulfilling my duties as Head Girl, as I found myself in professional scenarios that gave me a glimpse of what life would be like in the future when you're working and expected to take more responsibility."



ASPIRING MEDICS CONFERENCE

Year 12 students visited the University of Birmingham Medical School to attend the Aspiring Medics Conference. During the visit, students gained an insight into life as a medical student through talks and discussions led by current undergraduates. Students also took part in a interactive interview skills workshop, working closely with members of the BWAMS Society (Birmingham Widening Access to Medical Science Society). The experience provided valuable guidance on the medical application process and helped students develop confidence and practical skills for future medical school interviews.



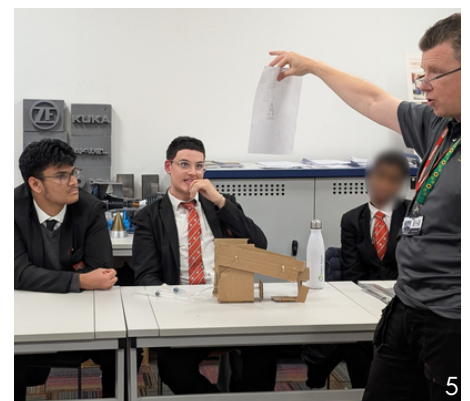
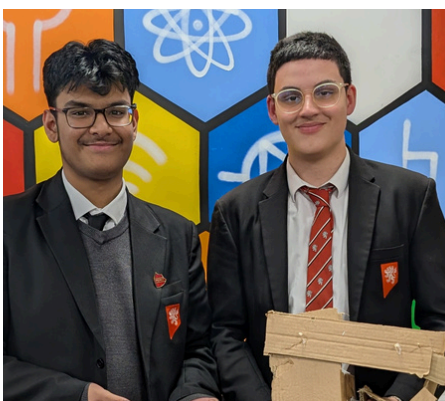
EXPLORING STEM CAREERS

Fifteen of our Year 11 pupils, with an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) had a brilliant day at Make UK where they took part in Future Makers Day to gain an insight into engineering.

They spent the day working through a hands-on workshop where they were challenged to create a functioning model of a mechanical system – this involved using traditional modelling materials, applying their understanding of pneumatics, and exploring the principles behind mechanical systems.

The level of creativity, teamwork and problem-solving they showed was great to see – a fantastic insight into what future engineers can achieve when they are given the space to experiment, design and think differently.

Huge thanks to the team at Make UK for providing such an engaging and meaningful experience for our pupils. Days like this make a real difference in helping young people see themselves in STEM careers. We look forward to working more with Make UK in the future.



EXPLORING NUCLEAR FRONTIERS

We regularly visit the Nuclear Physics Facility at the University of Birmingham. This world-class facility houses one of only three neutron accelerators in the world, making it a special site for cutting-edge research and learning.

The Neutron Accelerator

The neutron accelerator at the University of Birmingham is at the forefront of both medical and industrial research. This sophisticated instrument plays a crucial role in exploring new frontiers in nuclear physics. One significant area of research involves investigating the stability of materials intended for use in building nuclear fusion reactors. These reactors represent the future of electricity generation in the UK, promising a cleaner and more sustainable energy source.

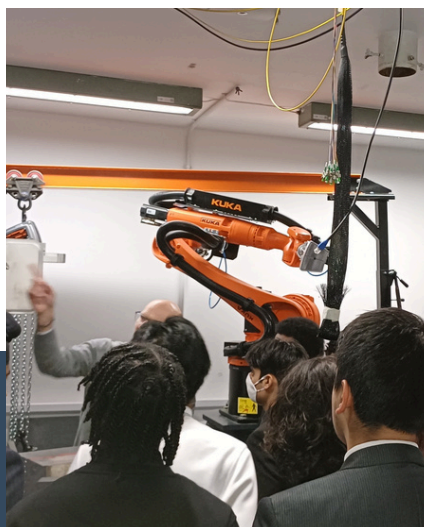
The research conducted with the neutron accelerator has wide-ranging uses:

- Medical applications that involve developing advanced treatments and diagnostic tools
- Enhancing the safety and efficiency of industrial nuclear reactors

This dual focus highlights the versatility and importance of the work being done at the facility.

The Cyclotron

In addition to the neutron accelerator, the facility houses the University's own cyclotron. This instrument is used for producing radioisotopes for the NHS and there are close links between the Nuclear Physics Department and medical establishments across the UK.



For Year 13 students, visiting the Nuclear Physics Facility is an invaluable experience. It offers them a tangible connection between their classroom learning and real-world applications. Witnessing the practical use of nuclear physics in both medical and industrial contexts provides a deeper understanding and appreciation of the subject.

The University of Birmingham's Nuclear Physics Facility stands as an exceptional resource for students and researchers alike. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering a new generation of scientists and engineers. With thanks to Professor Carl Wheldon for facilitating the visit.



LAUNCHING CURIOSITY WITH ASTROPHYSICS

Thank You to the University of Birmingham's **Poynting Physical Society** for hosting an exciting and engaging 'Introduction to Astrophysics' workshop for our Year 8 pupils. A wonderful journey through the vast and fascinating universe, sparking curiosity and a newfound appreciation for the wonders of space.

Our pupils had the opportunity to explore the mysteries of stars and galaxies. The discussions illuminated the life cycle of stars, the formation of galaxies, and the various celestial bodies across the cosmos.

The workshop also introduced our pupils to the tools and methods which scientists use to study the universe such as telescopes and space probes, allowing us to explore the farthest distances in space!

The enthusiasm and passion demonstrated by the Poynting Physical Society members was contagious, leaving a lasting impression on our young explorers. Thank you once again to the society!



SCHOOL WINTER CONCERT



We recently hosted our popular Winter Music Concert, showcasing the diverse talents of our pupils and students. The evening was filled with performances that highlighted the dedication and skill of our young people engaged in instrumental and singing lessons, as well as those involved in school ensembles and dance performances.

We enjoyed performances from serene orchestral pieces, harmonious blend of strings, woodwinds, and brass, setting a festive tone for the evening. Solo performances on the piano, violin, and guitar, followed vocal talent from our choir and soloist singers captivating the audience with their vocal prowess. In addition to the music, our dance group performed a beautifully choreographed routine.

The evening was joyful, celebrating the talents of our School. Thank you to all our performers, staff who made the evening possible, and of course to our wonderful UoBS friends and families who joined us for the evening to celebrate with us.





Explore your future pathways and options with Unifrog - an online careers and pathways platform that helps pupils and students explore future options and make informed decisions. It brings together information on careers, GCSE and post-16 choices, apprenticeships, universities and employability skills in one place, supporting pupils and students to plan confidently for their next steps. See below to see how each year group can use Unifrog to best help them:

YEAR 7 - DISCOVER

Pupils can use Unifrog to:

- Complete interest and personality quizzes to reflect on who they are.
- Explore the Careers Library to discover unfamiliar jobs.
- Begin making links between subjects, skills and real-world careers.
- Develop early habits of reflection and curiosity.

YEAR 8 - EXPLORE

Pupils can use Unifrog to:

- Explore career groups and sectors.
- Revisit quizzes to see how interests and strengths are developing.
- Gain a knowledge of different pathways (A Levels, vocational pathways, apprenticeships).
- Begin thinking about how their virtues and essential skills connect to work.

YEAR 9 - PERCEIVE

Pupils can use Unifrog to:

- Explore how GCSE subjects link to careers and pathways.
- Use Subjects Library pages to understand where choices can lead.
- Reflect on strengths, interests and values when considering options.
- Understand the importance of keeping future pathways open.

YEAR 10 - PREPARE

Pupils can use Unifrog to:

- Research jobs and careers in more depth.
- Understand qualification and training requirements.
- Identify suitable work experience ideas linked to interests.
- Build skills awareness and reflect on employability strengths.

YEAR 11 - EVOLVE

Pupils can use Unifrog to:

- Compare sixth form, college and training providers.
- Explore apprenticeship and vocational routes.
- Check entry requirements and progression pathways.
- Develop CVs, applications and personal statements.
- Review and confirm plans with confidence.

YEAR 12 - ANALYSE

Students can use Unifrog to:

- Research degree, higher and degree apprenticeship routes.
- Compare university courses and entry requirements.
- Build evidence for personal statements and applications.
- Identify work experience, volunteering and enrichment.
- Refine skills profiles and CVs.

YEAR 13 - ENGAGE

Students can use Unifrog to:

- Finalise applications and next-step decisions.
- Prepare for interviews, assessments and transitions.
- Explore alternative, backup or clearing routes.
- Strengthen employability and future readiness.
- Reflect on growth, skills and achievements.



unifrog



www.unifrog.org

UNDERSTANDING URBAN DEPRIVATION

Fieldwork plays a crucial role in our GCSE Geography curriculum, providing pupils with the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. In this particular study, the aim was to test the hypothesis: 'Worcester is less deprived to the west of the river than the east.' This investigation required Year 11 pupils to engage in data collection methods across multiple locations within Worcester.

Data Collection & Environmental Quality Surveys

Pupils visited five locations in Worcester. At each site, they used different techniques to gather data. Environmental Quality Surveys (EQS) were conducted at each location. These surveys involved assessing factors such as:

- Litter and graffiti levels: Indicators of maintenance and social care.
- Building conditions: Reflecting economic investment in the area.
- Green spaces: Availability and quality of parks or natural areas.

Mood Mapping

Mood Mapping was used to capture the emotional responses of pupils to each location. This involved recording their feelings and first impressions, which could reflect the perceived quality of the environment.

Traffic Count

A Traffic Count was conducted to measure the volume of vehicles passing through each area. High traffic volumes could indicate economic activity but also contribute to noise and pollution, impacting the quality of life.



Public Questionnaires

Finally, pupils carried out a questionnaire with local residents. This survey aimed to gather public opinion on various aspects of life in Worcester, such as:

- Perceived safety: Residents' feelings of safety and security
- Community facilities: Availability and quality of local services and amenities.
- Overall satisfaction: General contentment with living conditions.

Further Research

The visits provided valuable insights into the spatial distribution of deprivation in Worcester, and will add to our Geographers' knowledge base and skills, encouraging critical thinking. Future research could include a broader range of locations and additional socio-economic indicators to enrich the understanding of deprivation patterns in Worcester.

A SMASHING VICTORY!

Year 11 pupil James M has captured the spotlight by winning the prestigious Edgbaston Priory Graded Open – an annual squash tournament held at Edgbaston Priory Club. Despite the challenging odds, he faced seasoned adult competitors and won the tournament after a gruelling final match. This achievement is not only a testament to his talent but also to his unwavering dedication and perseverance.

This success has further fuelled James' passion for the sport and his aspirations for the future. Encouraged by the support received from his teachers, James is keen to pursue A level PE at our Sixth Form, secure a squash scholarship in America, and eventually obtain a degree in physiotherapy – a clear indication of his commitment and vision.

We extend our congratulations on this achievement – a stepping stone toward a bright and promising future in both squash and his academic pursuits. Keep up the brilliant work James!



YEAR 12 WORK EXPERIENCE: POLITICS

A level Politics student Sarah recently had the unique opportunity to work alongside Home Secretary and Birmingham Ladywood MP Shabana Mahmood and her constituency team. The experience allowed her to find out more about politics and the dedication required to support a local community. The experience has equipped Sarah with invaluable knowledge and experience. "This opportunity allowed me to meet numerous dedicated people, who showed me all the hard work that goes into meeting the needs of the people they serve. It has altered my view on politics and public service and I am truly grateful to Shabana for this opportunity." Sarah.

Year 12 Work Experience will take place between Monday 29 June – Friday 03 July 2026. Take time during the break to think about possible placement opportunities you would like to work in – perhaps Sarah's experience has inspired you to look further afield! Your Sixth Form Team will be in touch with more details in January 2026.



END OF YEAR AWARDS

As the calendar year draws to a close, our end-of-year award assemblies gave us the perfect chance to pause and celebrate. We are proud to recognise the achievements, growth, and character development of our pupils and students across the year groups – either through academic achievements, leadership, service, or sport. Congratulations to all our award winners, and thank you to staff and families for supporting our young people every step of the way.





SPORTS TOUR 2025

BARCELONA







ENRICHMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Careers in Science & Medicine

Our pupils enjoyed their visit to the University of Birmingham delving into the fascinating world of careers in medicine with the Department of Metabolism and Systems Science. Pupils participated in a hands-on digestion simulation workshop, discovering how subjects like chemistry, biology, mathematics, and computer science can merge in multidisciplinary careers. A fantastic way to explore future possibilities!



What does it mean to be part of the University of Birmingham?

Year 7 pupils have been exploring what makes the University of Birmingham distinct and what part it plays in our city. From meeting university students, going on campus tours, and finding out more about the professionals that work there, our pupils will expand their curiosity. Recently we found out more about the history of the UoB Old Joe Clock Tower and constructed a few 'mini-Joe's' of our own! Did You Know? There is an asteroid named after Old Joe, which can be found in the belt between Mars and Jupiter: Asteroid 10515.

Cooking on a Budget

Cooking on a budget doesn't mean sacrificing on flavour! Year 12 have been whipping up delicious, nutritious meals whilst keeping their expenses low in our 'Cooking on a Budget' enrichment. Not only are they learning to meal prep like a pro, but are also developing budgeting skills (useful for life at uni!) and character virtues such as responsibility and resilience.



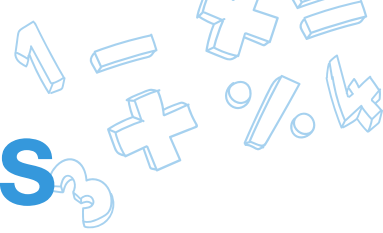
Entrepreneurs in the making...

Our Year 10 pupils took part in the King's Trust Enterprise Challenge. They explored sustainability and business concepts and completed an online game that put them in charge of running a new micro business. They designed and pitched fantastic business ideas that could improve our School and local community.

Sustainable Solutions

Our Year 8 pupils have been busy creating an environmentally friendly, self-sufficient, sustainable village. Considering elements such as renewable energy sources, innovative architecture, and project managing their construction, pupils are building a greener future together!





MATHEMATICS MARVELS

A number of our Sixth Form Mathematicians took part in the annual **Senior Team Maths Challenge with UKMT (UK Maths Trust)** - a national competition that gives students the opportunity to tackle a variety of engaging mathematical activities while developing teamwork and communication skills. Teams of four students from schools and colleges across the UK take part in regional finals, with the highest-scoring teams invited to compete in the National Final.

Our students took part and achieved an excellent set of results. They won a number of awards, including a Gold Award for Agastya, who also qualified for the follow-on round of the **Andrew Jobbings Kangaroo (a 60 minute, 20 question 'integer answer' challenge)**. Agastya performed exceptionally well and we are very proud of all our students' achievements.



SIXTH FORM APPLICATION DEADLINE: 13 FEBRUARY 2026

Applications for Year 12 places in September 2026 opened in November. Year 11 pupils are reminded to submit their applications by 13 February 2026. If you have any questions, please contact admissions@uobschool.org.uk. **Start your application today! [CLICK HERE](#) or scan opposite to access our portal.**

FOODBANK DONATIONS

We are proud to support our local **B30 Foodbank** and help make a positive difference in our community. Thank you to our families and staff for their generosity. With your help, we were able to donate a wide range of much-needed items. We are grateful for your continued support and kindness.

Christmas Lectures

Thank you to Dr Sanchez-Moran from the School of Biosciences at UoB for delivering a set of RAISE (Raising Aspirations in Secondary Education) Christmas Lectures for our Year 7 pupils. Year 12 also took part in special 125th Anniversary lectures on campus.

Christmas Lunch

With thanks to our School caterers Caterlink, for their wonderful Christmas Lunch, which was enjoyed by all.

Alumni Certificate Collection Evening

It was wonderful to welcome back our former Year 11 and Year 13 pupils and students from last academic year to School to collect their GCSE and A level certificates. It was great to catch up with them and find out what they've been studying and doing since leaving UoB School.



IN OTHER NEWS...

Remembrance Day

Our School community marked Remembrance Day with a heartfelt period of reflection that began with opening remarks from the Principal. Staff, pupils, and students all gathered together on Armistice Day in the School grounds to pay their respects.

More than just a Moustache...

Movember is a global movement that aims to raise awareness for critical issues affecting boys' and men's health, focusing on physical and mental well-being. Held every November, it encourages individuals to grow moustaches as a visible symbol of support. Whilst a total of £200 was raised by staff, the real impact was the powerful conversations had with pupils and students to break down stigma surrounding mental health which often prevents men and boys from talking about their problems and seeking help when they need it. A huge thank you to everyone who took part, donated, and supported us.

New School Lift

We are pleased to announce that the installation of our new School lift has been completed. This important addition will significantly improve accessibility within our building, supporting safe and inclusive movement. We thank the skilful construction team, and the School community for their patience during the installation process.

Year 12 visit Parliament

Year 12 A level Politics students visited the Houses of Parliament, providing a unique opportunity for students to gain practical insights into the political world, beyond what textbooks can offer. Whilst exploring Westminster Hall and the Supreme Court, students were able to foster a greater understanding and appreciation for the complexities of politics and governance.

Young Poets Week Launch

We were thrilled to welcome Jasmine Gardosi, the award-winning spoken word artist, beatboxer, and former Birmingham Poet Laureate (2022 - 2024). Their captivating performance sparked the imaginations of our pupils and set the stage for the celebration of Young Poets Week at School! We hope this will inspire the next generation of poets. Thank you, Jasmine, for your wonderful contribution! [Pupils aged 11-14 can apply to become the next Young Poet Laureate here.](#)





LEARNING TOGETHER, LEADING TOGETHER



Below are just a few highlights of our collaborative work with the University of Birmingham this term, bringing together School and University expertise to enrich learning and research.

- Pupils took part in the YouWIL (Young Women in Leadership) over the Summer. YouWIL is a week-long online summit and collaboration between the University of Birmingham and Birmingham City Council.
- Dr E Sanchez-Moran (School of Biosciences at UoB) delivered a set of RAISE (Raising Aspirations in Secondary Education) Christmas Lectures at School for Year 7 pupils.
- Year 8 pupils met bestselling horror author Darren Shan on campus, as part of the National Literacy Trust's 'Haunted Birmingham' campaign.
- Dr E Wingfield (UoB Department of English Literature) delivered two masterclasses on 'An Inspector Calls' - a core English Literature text - to Year 11 pupils.
- 400 sixth form students visited UoB to learn more about Pathways and Access to Birmingham programmes in preparation for Post-18 options and guidance.
- The School continues to host over 100 PGCE students for their introductory practice in Biology, Physics, History, Modern Foreign Languages, and Mathematics. We are also currently hosting five UoB trainee teachers for their school placement.
- We have now embedded a School College System - each college is named after a UoB landmark or building: Lapworth, Barber, Winterbourne, Munrow, Muirhead, and Bramall.



YEAR 10 WORK EXPERIENCE

Monday 29 June - Friday 03 July 2026

Work Experience is only 28 weeks away!

Please use the Christmas break to talk to friends and family about possible work placement opportunities. Take time to research places you're interested in and contact employers to ask if they can offer you a placement.

Make sure you regularly check **ClassCharts** for updates from our Work Experience Team!

Once you have secured a placement, please complete this online: [Work Experience Confirmation Form](#) with all the required details.

Well done to everyone who has already found a placement - great work! 🎉

THE BOOK NOOK

Two Cities Book Award

Twelve of our pupils and students took part in judging the Two Cities Book Award. Now in its fourth year, the award is run in partnership between King Edward's School in Edgbaston and Wolverhampton Grammar School with the aim to inspire young adults to read for pleasure. During Enrichment we read and discussed the four books on the shortlist and then were lucky enough to attend the award ceremony to see the winner revealed live.

National Poetry Day

On National Poetry Day we turned the library into a performance space at breaktime with readings by members of our Creative Writing Club. It was a lovely event that showcased the talent we have in school!

Joining the Children's Book Group

We are now members Birmingham Children's Book Group which allows our pupils and students to participate in the Children's Book Award. We are part of a national network of schools chosen to read and rate 22 of the longlisted titles in the KS3 longer novels category. This is a truly unique book award because it's the only one where the winners are chosen by children. A special mention should go to reading superstar, Aisha, in Year 8 who has read and rated eight different titles from the longlist (on top of all the books she has borrowed from the library)!

Top Borrowers

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Aisha R (Year 8) | 6. Salih D (Year 7) |
| 2. Jack RM (Year 9) | 7. Mustafa K (Year 7) |
| 3. Hannah A (Year 9) | 8. Armela D (Year 7) |
| 4. Kashif B (Year 11) | 9. Max R (Year 7) |
| 5. Hephzibah O (Year 8) | 10. Porpian N (Year 9) |

Most Popular Books

1. The Hunger Games - Suzanne Collins
2. The Recruit - Robert Muchamore
3. Heartstopper Vol 1 - Alice Oseman
4. The Hidden Oracle - Rick Riordan
5. Brawl of the Wild - Dav Pilkey
6. Savage Island - Bethany Pearce
7. Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief - Rick Riordan
8. Little Badman and the Invasion of the Killer Aunties - Humza Arshad
9. Gone - Michael Grant
10. Dog Days - Jeff Kinney



Reading Champions
September - December
Form 7X2!



As a School, we
borrowed 3,321 books
from the Library since
September!



FUTURE WRITERS 2025



Congratulations to student Emily H, who was successfully shortlisted, from thousands of entries, for the Year 10 to 13 category in the Benjamin Zephaniah Future Writers Competition organised by Birmingham City University. "I was surprised to be one of the ten shortlisted in my age group!" Emily was invited to celebrate with her peers at a special evening, where she also collected her award.

"I regularly attend the School's Creative Writing Club after school on Mondays week B (we do a variety of activities - highly recommend)! It was one day last year when Ms Middleton (our librarian) introduced us to the Benjamin Zephaniah Future Writers Competition. The theme was 'Nature Trail', so we went outside to jot down all the things we could see, hear and smell. So to draft my poem I only had to string the descriptions together and say the lines aloud to get the rhythm just right.



I usually walk to School, but for work experience I had to take the bus. This was great because if I got stuck I could look out at the colourful trees and start imagining a scene that could be playing out just out of my sight.

My poem was about a person wandering around a forest, watching animals enjoying all it has to offer. At the end I contrasted this with city noise, which I emphasised by making the couplet shorter and not rhyme like most of my other lines. I didn't originally plan to add the volta (shift in tone) but I like how it highlights the importance of conserving the green spaces around us.

I love playing with words, especially writing short stories. It feels amazing when you find just the perfect word, and I'm particularly a fan of slipping in the occasional cheeky comment. I definitely recommend other people take part in competitions like the annual Benjamin Zephaniah Future Writers; there are plenty out there for all age groups. Starting prompts are interesting because they make me write about a range of topics and in different styles - as well as giving me the motivation to finish!" *Emily H.*

WORDPLAY FESTIVAL



We had a wonderful time at School during the Wordplay Festival, curated by 'How Brave is the Wren' Bookshop, welcoming no fewer than four authors to help celebrate.

- Kenechi Udogu spoke to our budding scientists about her journey into writing science fiction, inspiring pupils to imagine what kind of future inventions they'd most likely to see become a reality.
- Beth O'Brien shared her journey from studying for a PhD exploring disability in fairytales at the University of Birmingham to becoming a full-time children's author. Pupils had a go at writing their own reimagined fairy tales.
- Spoken word artist and author, Steven Camden, was a huge hit with our Year 7 pupils and his creative writing workshop.
- Liz Hyder led a lively Enrichment with keen writers from across the school community, helping them to devise their own Netflix series and giving them an insight into what it's like in a real TV writers' room.



What an inspiring week of creativity, storytelling, and imagination!

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

A new feature for our newsletter, where we will share pupil and student achievements and successes they have accomplished outside of School. Whether it's a new skill, winning an award, or helping others in the community - we want to hear about it! If you would like your child to be featured and celebrated, please contact us by filling in this online form: [Share your news here](#) or scan below.



Congratulations to **Mustafa A** in Year 9 who has been selected for the U14 Warwickshire County Cricket Team! Well done Mustafa, we are proud of you!



A shoutout to Year 12 student **Taj Al Deen A** who has achieved Black Belt in Karate and won gold in a recent Kata Competition.



Well done to **Layla H** in Year 7 for her part in judging the Audio Production Awards in the 'Little Ears' category for the best children's podcast. It's the first time young people were allowed to join the panel and Layla thoroughly enjoyed assessing all the entries.

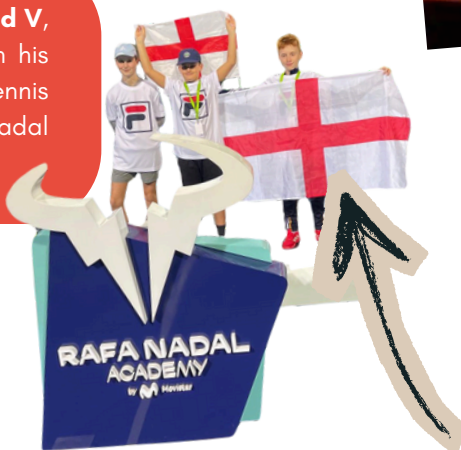


Tara D in Year 9 was recently selected to take part in the CBSO Youth Chorus, which performs alongside the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Her commitment includes weekly rehearsals of approx. 3.5 hours and performances at the Symphony Hall. Tara is scheduled to perform in three Christmas concerts from 18 - 20 December. We hope they all go well Tara!

Joel C in Year 8 has been selected to represent Birmingham at the World Scout Jamboree in Poland during the summer of 2027. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that reflects his commitment, leadership, and dedication to the Scouting community. To aid this, Joel has been busy fundraising to reach the total of £140,000! Well done Joel and we wish you all the best with your fundraising!



Congratulations to Year 7 pupil **David V**, who came 6th among 27 players in his age category at an international tennis tournament hosted by the Rafa Nadal Academy in Spain earlier this month!



Congratulations to **Mathew M** in Year 7 who has achieved his Stage 3 Learn to Swim Award with Swim England!



TERM DATES 2026

Spring Term 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Monday 05 January 2026

Term Starts: Tuesday 06 January 2026

*Staff Research Day: Friday 13 February 2026

Half Term: Monday 16 February to Friday 20 February 2026 (09 days incl)

Term ends: Friday 27 March 2026 from 12.00

*no pupils or students to attend/non-teaching day.

Summer Term 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Monday 13 April 2026

Term Starts: Tuesday 14 April 2026

*BANK HOLIDAY: Monday 04 May 2026

Half Term: Monday 25 May to Friday 29 May 2026 (09 days incl)

*Staff Research Day: Friday 26 June 2026

*Staff Professional Development Day: Monday 06 July 2026

Term ends: Friday 17 July 2026 from 12.00

*no pupils or students to attend/non-teaching day.

[View our full term dates here, including dates for 2026/2027.](#)



USEFUL CONTACTS

PAUSE - Forward Thinking Birmingham

0207 841 4470

A mental health service provider for young people up to the age of 25 in Birmingham.

Childline

0800 1111

[childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Support for children and young people in the UK, including a free 24-hour helpline.

SHOUT

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

Available 24/7

A FREE and confidential service for anyone in the UK who needs support.

Birmingham Mind

0121 262 3555 (helpline)

help@birminghammind.org

Open 09.00 - 23.00 everyday. Offering support to people who may be feeling low, anxious, worried, or stressed.

NSPCC

0800 800 5000

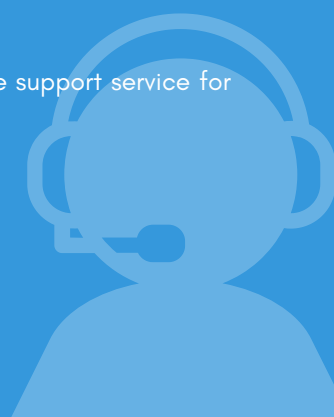
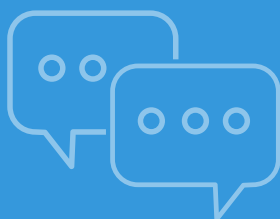
[nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Support for children and anyone worried about a child.

Kooth

[kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)

Free, anonymous online support service for young people.



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

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Top Tips for a

TECH-FREE CHRISTMAS

It can be difficult to stay away from technology and devices, and sometimes this means that people – of any age – can find it hard to be present in the moment. As a period when families are able to spend some quality time together and enjoy each other's company, Christmas is the perfect opportunity to step away from our phones, laptops and consoles and concentrate on the things that really matter. Follow our top ten tips for a tech-free festive period and make the most of this holiday season. Merry Christmas!

1. BOARD GAMES CAN BE FUN (HONEST)

OK, no one wants a repeat of that incident when your youngest had to pay triple rent on Mayfair, but going back to basics with a card or board game can be a fantastic bonding experience. Choose a game that even the youngest members of your family can enjoy and have a fun tech-free time.

2. MAKE YOUR OWN DECORATIONS

Spending time on arts and crafts is a brilliant way to relax and spend some productive time offline. Making your own Christmas decorations as a family can become a wholesome tradition and leave you with some treasured mementos, too.

3. GO FOR A WINTER WALK

Not much beats wrapping up warm on a crisp December day and taking a stroll. Whether alone or with the family, a walk is a fantastic way to clear your head and relish the break from hectic normal life. As an extra festive treat, why not make a flask of hot chocolate to take with you?

4. BAKE SOME FESTIVE TREATS

Not all Christmas cooking has to be a stressful chore that's timed with military precision. Baking some simple festive treats like cookies doesn't have to take hours – and will make sure you're stocked up on tasty things to offer any friends or family members who pop round.

5. READ A FAMILY STORY TOGETHER

Turn story time into an event. Make the living room or bedroom into a tech-free space, light some candles, make some hot drinks and reach for a classic Christmas tale. It's a fantastic way to relax before bed, and the right story will help to get the whole family into the festive spirit.

6. TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS

It sounds obvious, but turning off email and app notifications can give you more control of your relationship with technology. Getting into the habit of checking your phone periodically – rather than reacting every time a notification arrives – helps you to stay present in the moment.

7. FEED THE BIRDS

Food's hard to come by for wildlife in winter, so helping our feathered friends is a very worthwhile reason to put down those devices and reconnect with nature. Fill a bird feeder in the garden or take a snack for the ducks in your local park (but ditch the bread in favour of oats, rice or birdseed).

8. SET DAILY LIMITS

Many apps and devices let you set reminders to let you know how long you've used them for that day. Setting daily limits puts you firmly in charge of your time and will help to ensure you don't miss out on any family Christmas memories because you're engrossed in your phone or laptop.

9. GET ON YOUR BIKE

Exercise, such as going for a run or a bike ride is an excellent way to burn off some of those Yuletide calories while giving your brain and eyes a break from screen-based activity. Physical exertion also helps reduce anxiety and releases endorphins which can improve your sense of wellbeing.

10. MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

There can be a lot of pressure to meet up with friends, make video calls and check in with people at Christmas – but remember that you need time to relax as well. Don't feel guilty about not replying to messages and emails immediately – the holiday is your chance to drop down a gear or two.

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