

Autumn Term 2025

Bensham Manor Newsletter



Headteacher's Welcome

Welcome to our Autumn Term 2025 Newsletter! This has been a wonderful term with students growing and developing. It has been lovely to see the Year 7 pupils settle in over the past term. They are really growing in confidence and are successfully navigating their way around the school. Well done Year 7.

Our Year 11 pupils have been working very hard, sitting a series of mock examinations and some real ones too across a number of subjects. I am incredibly proud of the hard work and commitment which they have shown. Our Post 16 students continue to support the whole school through a number of initiatives. They support The Felix Project, bagging up food items for families on a weekly basis. They continue to provide breakfast bagels each morning to pupils and operate the Drinks Hub in the front playground. Feedback from Post 16 families shows us that students are applying these skills at home too which is truly wonderful. A huge well done to them!

We have celebrated a number of festivals and events including Harvest and Diwali and pupils took part in Remembrance Day events. We have done lots of fundraising for various charities too including raising money for Children in Need and the hurricane in Jamaica. The PE Department have organised a number of sporting events. The highlight of the term is our rowing crew who took part in the Great River Race to raise money for the Sickle Cell Charity. Congratulations to all involved. The Drama Department, in collaboration with Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival, has produced another successful play, The Tempest. Performing in a play takes lots of commitment, dedication and hard work. Well done to all the pupils and staff involved.

What makes Bensham such a successful school is the hard work and determination shown by staff, pupils, the Governing Board and the excellent relationships with families and with Croydon LA. Thanks for your continued support. I want to wish you all a very happy Christmas. Have a really restful break. Pupils return on Tuesday January 6th.

Fiona Robinson, Headteacher

Allyson Swaby Visit

Allyson Swaby visited Bensham as a positive role model for girls and women and in support of Black History Month. A centre-back for Crystal Palace and the Jamaican national team, she answered many questions from students and shared insights from her football career.



Christmas Crafty Crafts

We had a great turnout at this year's Christmas Craft Session, it gave everyone the opportunity to meet other parents, governors, and staff members, all whilst listening to Christmas music, enjoying a hot cuppa, eating pastries, and getting covered in glitter and glue. Everyone had a wonderful time!

Thank you to all of those who attended and helped us kickstart the festive period.

Caroline and Farhana, Parent Govenors



Running at Bensham

Students have been training this term by doing bleep tests in PE lessons for our annual cross-country Fun Run, which took place in September. Year 11 sports leaders organised the course layout and ran alongside younger students to help them cross the finish line. As with each year it was a battle between the houses, with Red Dragons snatching victory this time! The Fun Run raised money for the Sickie Cell Society charity, which you can find more information about in the River Race section of this newsletter. Students also took part in several cross-country trips, including the Surrey Schools Cross Country Championships. We were the only school to win medals in all of the team events, what an achievement!



Great River Race

On the 20th of September, our Year 11 crew of Dylan, Darryle, Jeremiah, Rohan, and Joshua took on the challenge of rowing 22 miles along the River Thames in the Great River Race. They faced the toughest conditions of any Bensham crew in the past, all while navigating alongside over 300 other boats. The crew completed the race in a marathon time of 4 hours and 18 minutes!

After the race, Dylan was interviewed by the riverside announcer, where he spoke about the team's efforts and explained that they were rowing not only for the challenge, but also to raise money for the Sickle Cell Society. The cause was inspired by a close friend of the crew who had been absent from school due to sickle cell illness. Thanks to their determination and the generosity of supporters, the team raised an incredible **£2,063.96** for the charity!

We would also like to thank Palace for Life for their funding and support, which helped make this achievement possible. The Great River Race organisation were also very helpful in coordinating our experience, thank you!



Book Trust

This year Year 7's have been lucky enough to choose a free book from the Book Trust who champion the right for every child to have access to reading. There were some amazing choices from a wide range of authors and genres. The Year 7's received their books last week and have taken them home to read or to be read with. Remember reading is important for all of us - even adults!



Outdoor Learning

Year 8's have been busy getting creative making their very own moon! They are just fantastic. Year 9's and the Nurture group were super busy making things for the Skills for Life Christmas sale. We also had a little photo shoot with the Nurture group and some of our animals as seen on the right.



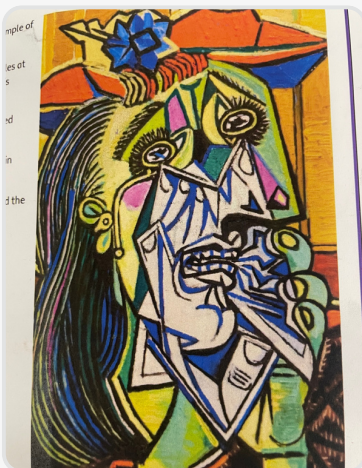
Christmas at Woodlarks

Our Bensham choir had a wonderful time singing at Woodlarks Residential Centre. They were amazing, with their fantastic performance even impressing a very special guest... Father Christmas himself!



Art

In art pupils have been working on developing their drawing skills and ideas with a focus on line and colour. There have been some really beautiful pieces this term!



Black History Month

Patty Sale Success – £120 Raised!

A massive thank you to everyone who bought a treat at our special patty sale! Because of your support, we raised £120, which has already been sent over to the Jamaica Relief Fund. It's wonderful to see our school come together to help communities in Jamaica facing tough times. Even small actions here make a real impact.



Storytelling with Sonia

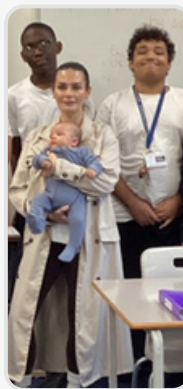
One of our favourite moments of Black History Month was having Sonia join us in the library. She didn't just read to students; she really got them involved in the storytelling. The students loved hearing tales that celebrated Black heritage and resilience - it sparked some fantastic conversations afterwards!

Posters and Collages

All month, classes have been working on collages of influential Black figures. The students researched everyone from historical icons to modern-day athletes and poured that learning into their art. These have been put up in our main glass corridor and you can really tell how much effort the children put into their designs!

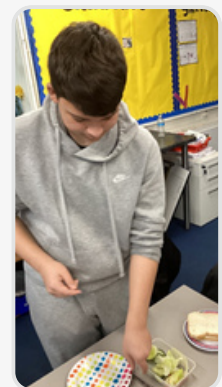


Childcare



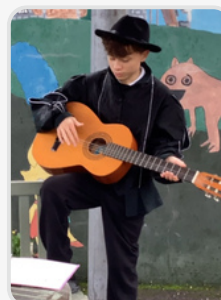
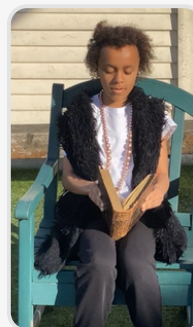
This term in Childcare Year 11 learnt the different stages of labour and choices pregnant women can make about their labour. Our very own Wenna (Head of Maths) came to discuss her pregnancy along with new born son Kai!

Year 10 have learnt in their Skills for Life lessons how to look after themselves. The importance of hygiene personally and in the home to making a healthy snack for their friends.



The Tempest Reimagined

A huge well done to our students for their fantastic work on "The Tempest Reimagined" play, which has been submitted to the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival. This was anything but a traditional Shakespeare production though! The cast told the story through the 'Bensham Newsroom', mixing the drama of Prospero's banishment and the shipwreck with clever, modern touches like breaking news updates.



An Explosive Science Trip!

KS3 pupils have been on an exciting science adventure to the New Scientist Live exhibition at the wonderful ExCeL London. They travelled to the venue using public transport and enjoyed seeing some of London's famous sights along the way.



During the visit, the group watched a fantastic live show featuring marvellous explosions and impressive loud bangs. They were also shown how science is used in everyday life and were given many opportunities to share and apply what they have learned in their science lessons.



Triumph at Dodgeball

At a recent dodgeball event in Surrey, the Bensham junior team won all their games to finish as Gold medallists ahead of nine other schools.



Our hard working Year 11 Sports Leaders helped to run the event then presented the medals!



Our Year 10 and 11's then repeated the feat at the Senior event and also finished with Gold!



Geography

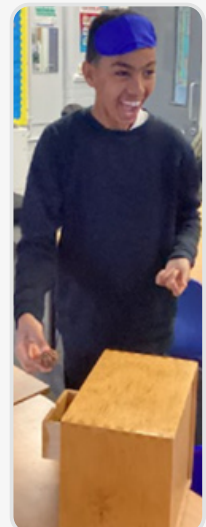
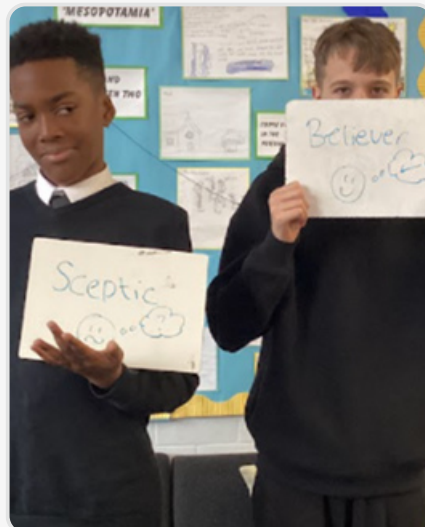
Year 11 have been studying Threatened Ecosystems. They had a competition to see who could build the tallest Mount Everest. We discussed the importance of careful tourism, careful farming and sustainable changes we can make to our lives to limit the effects of climate change upon e.g. the Himalayan Mountains.



In our topic on the UK, 11KB have been learning about Migration. We talked about British birds and birds that migrate to the UK, before going on a lovely walk to find some. They were excellent bird-spotters!

Religious Education

Year 9 have been exploring our senses in our topic on the 'Philosophy of Religion'. Thank you to Site Manager Mick for showing us some man-made mechanisms in your workshop. We have been asking the questions; What is the difference between physical and nonphysical? Do miracles happen? Am I a believer or a sceptic?



Sewing Club

Our sewing club elves have been busy making festive winter decorations for the Christmas fair, from candy canes to mini wreaths and felt ornaments! They've done really well at threading and sewing to create these ornaments to make our stall at the Christmas fair look amazing!



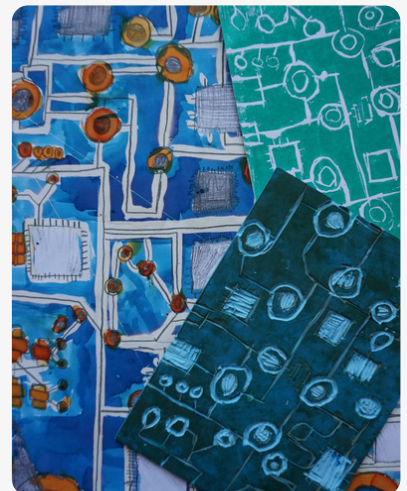
Palace for Life

This term students have been getting involved with all things Crystal Palace! Recently a group went to the annual Christmas party and met the mascots, cheerleaders and former goalkeeper Julian Speroni! Two matches have been attended as well, all thanks to the palace for Life Foundation.



Textile Highlights

Our KS4 students have demonstrated outstanding creativity and technical skill this term, producing a stunning range of textile work centred around their projects, 'Colour & Pattern' and 'Me, Myself and I'. Their personal input was beautifully translated through diverse printing techniques, including vibrant screen prints, expressive mono prints, and detailed lino prints. These pieces showcased their development as artists and their imaginative approach to personal identity.



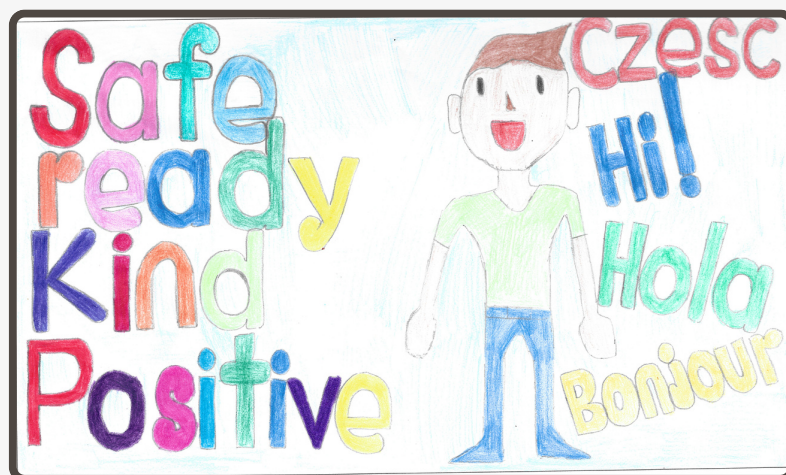
Forest School

Every week, a group of our Year 8s swaps the classroom for the fresh air at Forest School. These sessions are a great chance for them to slow down, work as a team, and build some real confidence while exploring the outdoors.



Poster Competition

Well done to Josiah in Year 11 for his brilliant winning poster! It displays the school rules and will be put on computer lock screens around the school.



Art Gallery Visit

Our Year 11 Textiles students enjoyed a truly inspiring trip to the Newport Street Gallery to experience the dynamic collaboration exhibition, 'Triple Trouble'. This unique showcase brought together the works of contemporary artists Damien Hirst, Shepard Fairey, and Invader. Students thoroughly enjoyed examining the diverse range of art on display, which included striking contemporary paintings, innovative sculptures, and bold screen prints. It was a fantastic opportunity for them to see cutting-edge textile and artistic inspiration firsthand and gain a real appreciation for modern art.



Skills for Life Cooking

We've had a fantastic start to the year in the kitchen! Year 7s are growing in confidence, especially when kneading dough and making sandwiches, while Year 8s are tackling prep skills and healthy breakfasts. Year 9 and Year 11 have focused heavily on safety - mastering food storage and preventing cross-contamination with meats. Meanwhile, Year 10 have been applying nutrition knowledge to make delicious soups, and our Post-16 students are now cooking independently and learning First Aid.



Poetry Jam

On 22nd October, Adisa the Verbaliser returned to Bensham to host our annual Poetry Jam. This year's theme, "Standing Firm in Power and Pride," inspired powerful and thoughtful writing. More than 25 pupils bravely took to the stage to perform poems they had written themselves. Standing up in front of an audience to read aloud is no small feat, and we were immensely proud of the confidence, courage, and creativity our pupils displayed. Well done to everyone who wrote a poem and took part.



Diversity Bookmarks

At the end of the summer we celebrated our school's diversity during Diversity Week. One of the many ways we celebrated was to design new bookmarks - as usual our students were amazing and came up with lots of different designs supporting all areas of diversity. These have now been professionally made into bookmarks for the whole school to enjoy when reading. Congratulations to Elson, Kyle, Manha and Aarush for winning the competition with your amazing designs and well done to everyone who took part.



Old Pheasantry Residential

Year 11 returned from their residential with improved independent living skills and some great memories. They successfully managed their own daily routines (yes, even the washing up!) and spent their downtime exploring the area and bonding over team challenges.



Online Safety Over Christmas

Important information passed on from Kirstie Byrne, Deputy Headteacher

Many children receive new devices at Christmas. Please take a few minutes to:

- set up privacy controls
- check age ratings
- talk about in-game chat and messaging
- remind children they can speak to a trusted adult if something online makes them uncomfortable

Useful links:

- [CEOP: Home Safety Activities](#) – advice for parents and carers
- [UK Safer Internet Centre: Parental Controls](#) – safety settings guides
- [Internet Matters: Parental controls guides](#) – parental controls guides for many popular platforms and games

Sextortion – Important Online Safety Reminder

Agencies are seeing an increase in “sextortion”, where young people are pressured online to share images and then threatened for money. Please remind your child:

- not to respond to threats
- not to pay money or send further images
- to speak to a trusted adult immediately

If you are concerned, you can report directly to [CEOP](#) or speak to the school’s safeguarding team.

Holiday Support

School is closed over the Christmas break, but help is still available. If you or your child need support, you can contact:

- Local authority children’s services (insert details)
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Local mental health services - CAMHS - 0203 513 6062 CAMHS Crisis line - 0203 228 5980

Attendance

Please avoid early holiday departures wherever possible. If your child will be away from school for any reason, let us know in advance so we can support you.

Staying Safe in the Community

Please remind children about:

- travelling with friends where possible
- letting someone know where they are going
- staying in well-lit areas
- never meeting online contacts alone