

The Leicestrian



2024 - 2025

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LGS PRODUCTION OF 'SCHOOL OF ROCK'

A WORD FROM THE

Headmaster

MR WATSON

I never cease to be amazed by the sheer quantity and variety of energetic activity that fills a school year.

You may think that it is hardly surprising, given the size of our community and the facilities which we are so fortunate to enjoy. However, it is actually the quality and ambition of such endeavour that is so exciting at LGS – and which our talented editors have done their best to convey within these colourful pages. This is supported by a very powerful sense of joint effort: a desire by pupils and staff not only to benefit from opportunities, but to create them together and to achieve something quite remarkable.

Candidates from other schools coming for job interviews are quick to recognise this. They comment on the responsiveness and enthusiasm of our pupils in lessons and the calm and purposeful nature of our school. They enjoy meeting our staff and appreciate their warm welcome and very positive outlook. As one said to me recently: “I haven’t seen a face without a smile.” And another: “Your school is simply amazing!”

As I approach the end of my tenure at LGS, I can reflect on that magic. I have shared the exhilaration of our generous and well-rounded leavers as they achieve academic success beyond their dreams. I have seen the delight and dedication of our pupils as they represent the school in so many sports



– whether at A or D team level, in sunshine or hailstorm. I have experienced the buzz, excitement and natural confidence of our musicians and all involved in our drama productions as they work so hard to create something beautiful. And I have felt the contagious sense of fun that imbues so many activities, from challenging Duke of Edinburgh expeditions to community service in care homes and local charities, to special events such as Culture Day, or to the solving of a really complex maths problem!



As you browse this new edition of the Leicestrian, I hope you will be inspired by the intense pride we all share in belonging to this happy and vibrant community. I am very proud of our pupils and staff, and I have no doubts that our school will continue to go from strength to strength. Thank you, LGS – it's been a joy.

**THANK YOU,
LGS – IT'S BEEN A JOY.**

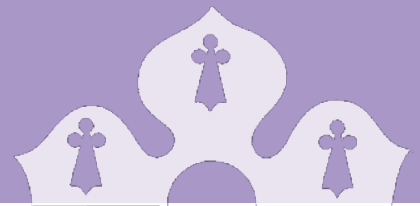
John Watson

Heads of School

2024 - 2025



**“THANKFULLY,
LGS TURNED
OUT TO BE AN
INCREDIBLY
FRIENDLY
PLACE.”**



A WORD FROM

Nandini Waghela



Serving as Head of School at LGS has been both a privilege and a responsibility that has shaped my final year in ways I will always value. At the heart of the role for me was the opportunity to act as a role model for younger students. I've taken great pride in being someone they could approach with questions or concerns, and I hope they've found me to be a friendly, supportive presence.

Working with the prefect team was one of the most rewarding aspects of the role. I valued being part of such a diverse group, each bringing different perspectives and strengths, as we worked to make a positive and lasting difference to the school community.

I was especially proud to work closely with Embrace. Our lively meetings promoted open conversations and a culture of respect and belonging which, in my role, I was able to support more widely – for example, through our Language and Culture Club. It was also a privilege to work so closely with teachers, whose support and partnership enabled many of our projects to succeed.

Music has always been an important part of my school life. Singing with the Senior Choir and performing with Big Band has allowed me to contribute to another vibrant aspect of the school this year, and to build connections with so many talented people across the year groups. Music is a creative outlet that grounds me, and it has been an honour to represent the school at concerts and events.

My time as Head of School taught me the importance of listening, leading with empathy, and working collaboratively to uplift others. I am grateful for the opportunity to give back to the community that has shaped me for the last 15 years, and I have had a lot of fun doing so!

Gabriel Smith

It has been an honour to serve as Head of School at LGS. I've had the privilege of working with an incredible group of people and have cherished the time I've spent here.

Arriving in Year 7 was a scary experience; I was thrust from a fairly small primary school into a far larger environment. Like many students transitioning to secondary school, I was afraid that I might not "fit in". Thankfully, LGS turned out to be an incredibly friendly place. The school has always made me feel welcome and it has been an absolute pleasure to meet so many good friends here (yes, even the teachers – I'm looking at you, Dr. VA!).

My seven years at this school have flown by. It feels like only yesterday that we were trying to complete the "Set" puzzle every Maths lesson with Dr Crawford, or directing a Crusade advert with Mrs Hird in History. We have made so many brilliant memories that I'm sure we will treasure for years to come.

Needless to say, my time here has been packed full of excitement. Outside the classroom, I've had the chance to meet some amazing people through co-curricular activities such as the school productions and Senior Choir – friends I know I'll stay in touch with long after we leave.

I must thank my amazing fellow Head of School, Nandini, who has always been such a steadfast and reliable friend and who has worked so hard this year to help the school in any way she can. I would also like to wish Mr. Watson the very best in his retirement. To the students, some advice: never forget your apron for Food Technology – the consequences can be unspeakable...

SPORT

Teamwork, talent and tenacity

The 2024/25 academic year has been a truly exceptional one for sport at our school, marked by outstanding achievements, record participation, and a vibrant sense of community spirit.

From national competitions to county finals, and from individual accolades to team triumphs, our students have once again demonstrated their talent, commitment, and sportsmanship across a wide range of disciplines.

One of the standout moments of the year was the **Boys' 1st XI cricket** team's prestigious victory over the MCC, a fixture steeped in tradition and excellence. It was a shame the inaugural MCC Women's team could not go ahead despite our Girls' 1st XI being ready and raring to go. Our U17 and U18 cricket teams made history by reaching the second round of national competitions for the first time, while all junior age groups progressed to the final rounds of their County Cup campaigns. We are especially proud of Ronak Rajashekar, who earned an Academy Scholarship with Leicestershire CCC, and Arnav Rai and Keshav Sthanakiya, who were selected for the Emerging Players' Programme.

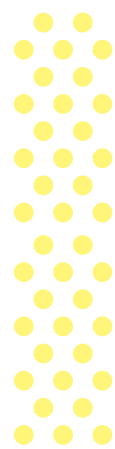
Girls' cricket has also gone from strength to strength. Both the U15 and U13 teams were runners-up in the County Indoor Competition and emerged as District Indoor Champions. A special mention goes to Imogen Major, who was named U13 Fielder of the Year at the LCCC Girls Awards Evening - a fantastic individual honour.



“GIRLS' CRICKET HAS GONE FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH”



“HOCKEY HAS SEEN REMARKABLE GROWTH AND SUCCESS”



In **netball**, the season began with a trip to Conover Hall, setting the tone for a year of high performance. The U18A team reached the regional finals and were County runners-up in the National Cup pathway. Congratulations to Flori Switzer and Emily Bunce, who were selected for the Northants Storm senior squads.

Hockey has seen remarkable growth and success. The U16 girls were runners-up in the Midlands Tier 3 Finals, and the U14 girls reached the semi-finals of the Tier 2 Midlands Finals. The 2nd XI girls completed an unbeaten season, while the newly established 2nd XI boys' team made a strong debut. In total, 418 pupils represented the school in hockey this year - a testament to the sport's popularity, inclusivity and amazing facilities here at LGS.



“WE ARE
INCREDIBLY
PROUD OF EVERY
STUDENT”

In **athletics**, our junior boys' and girls' teams, along with the inter boys' team, all qualified for regional finals (again). Freya Ives claimed the county title in the 1500m, and Leo Hastings achieved a top 30 national ranking in the National Combined Events in September 2024.

Our **swimming** and **cross-country** teams also shone brightly. The junior girls finished 16th nationally at the English Schools Swimming Championships, while both junior boys' and girls' teams qualified for regional finals in cross country.

This year's **rugby** season has been a remarkable one, marked by outstanding achievements across the board. Both the U12 and U15 teams triumphed at the prestigious Leicestershire Grammar Invitational 7s competition, showcasing their skill, teamwork, and determination. Their victories are a testament to the depth of talent and commitment within the school's rugby program. Adding to the season's success, several boys have been selected for the Leicester Tigers Developing Player Programme (DPP), Rory Stimpson and Eduards Orlovskis. Their inclusion highlights the promising future of rugby at the school and the strength of the player development we value here.

In **tennis**, the U15 girls were crowned county champions, and the school achieved a top 25 national ranking for girls' tennis and an impressive top 10 national ranking for boys' tennis.

Beyond competitive fixtures, it has been a joy to once again host **Sports Day** on site,





and through the hard work of the teaching, ground, medical and catering staff, it really is a team effort along with a celebration of participation, house spirit, and athleticism. Over 540 students represented the school this year across 500 fixtures in 13 different sports, reflecting the depth and breadth of our sporting programme. Our **house competitions** have been fiercely contested and wonderfully supported, adding to the sense of camaraderie and pride that really defines our school community.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to have returned from a **Senior Sports Tour** to South Africa, where our rugby, hockey, and netball teams competed internationally and experienced the unique sporting culture of a proud sporting nation.

We are incredibly proud of every student who has represented the school this year. Whether competing at the highest level or trying a new sport for the first time, your dedication and enthusiasm have been inspiring.



To those moving on, we hope you continue to stay active and carry forward the values and friendships forged through sport, wherever your next chapter takes you.

James McCann

DIRECTOR OF SPORT

MUSIC

Hitting the high notes

Every year, the standard of music-making at LGS continues to impress – and this year has been no exception, with students demonstrating extraordinary skill, dedication and enthusiasm.

Among the many highlights was the opportunity for Year 13 musicians Henry Wright (bassoon) and Vivek Patel (violin) to perform with the Bardi Orchestra in November. They were joined by Year 12 cellists Siyana Kotecha and Pol Macip Porter along with trumpeters Daniel Kolka, Charlotte Kelman and Jack Strong. The mature and confident musicianship shown by these soloists would have delighted even the most exacting of composers.

Another memorable moment came courtesy of our fabulous Big Band who performed alongside the Syd Lawrence Orchestra – widely recognised as the best in the country – with vocal soloists Jai Acquilla and Daniel Weston. It was a vibrant, foot-tapping performance that showcased the energy and flair of our young jazz musicians.

In December, our First Orchestra collaborated with the Drama Department for *Beauty and the Beast*. The music featured a number of less commonly heard instruments, with fine contributions from Theo Wong (percussion), Agnieszka Cygan (oboe and cor anglais) and Millie Warrilow (French Horn) helping to create a rich and atmospheric sound.

The Villiers String Quartet visited in January, working with students across both junior



“THIS WAS SHEER, SIZZLING, FOOT-TAPPING BLISS”

and senior schools and inspiring our String Orchestra, who played with them during the evening concert.

Our musicians have also enjoyed taking their talents into the wider community, with performances at Billesdon Church, Kibworth and Overdale Primary Schools and Leicester’s Little Theatre. These concerts form a valuable part of our commitment to sharing live music more widely and experiencing its positive impact.

March saw the return of our long-standing partnership with Youth Brass 2000 and a concert featuring the rejuvenated BLAST! (now with over 40 players), Symphonic Wind Band and



Big Band, bringing together students from across the school. With kind support from the Rotary Club of Kibworth and Fleckney, the event raised nearly £3,000 for Dementia UK and Space to Inspire, our project to improve the acoustics of St Nicholas Hall.

The year reached a grand finale in April with our Baroque Bonanza, involving some 200 performers including the First Orchestra, Lower School Singers, Senior Choir and LGS Chorus 2025. The programme included uplifting works by Bach, Handel and Vivaldi. Our professional soloists, OLs Eleanor Rashid and James Oldfield, described the standard of performance as flawless and outstanding.

The event also marked a farewell to our Year 13 musicians Nandini Waghela, Gabriel Smith, Henry Wright, Vivek Patel, Agnieszka Cygan, Sonia Naidu, Rishan Raja, Isobel Westerman,

Isaac Chi, Sam Li, Charlotte Man and Anay Gosai. We hope that music-making will remain part of their lives for many years to come.

With more composition workshops, film music, choral evensongs and new collaborations already in the pipeline, there is much to look forward to next year.

A big thank you to all of our musicians for your hard work and dedication. There is much to look forward to next year: LGS First Orchestra at the Movies, composition workshops, Choral Evensongs and much, much more!

John Barker

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

DRAMA

In the Spotlight

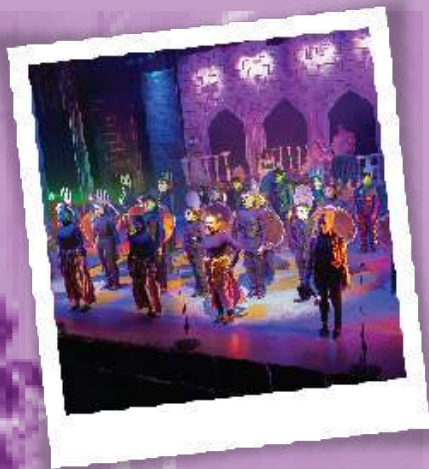
The curtain closes . . . on Act One.

It has been another incredibly busy year in the Drama Department, with productions, trips, examined performances, and so much more! Our first event of the year was the amazing production of Disney's **Beauty and the Beast**. Miss Adams and Miss Rowbotham worked with a fabulous cast and crew of 110 pupils to produce another tour de force, with an impressive full-scale professional set and

Mr Stagg's dazzling lighting designs.

It was a firm family favourite, and the audience response was rightly exuberant! In the Lent term it was the turn of the Lower School who, after a meticulous audition process, took on **School of Rock**, Mrs Garner assisting Miss Adams to direct the show. The cast showed impressive skills as they adopted a challenging array of characters – particularly the lead, Dewy Finn, who appeared in every scene in the show! It was a true test of stamina and Freddie Potter rose to the challenge.

Our programme of theatre trips has continued to give Drama students a great insight into the possibilities of theatre, and every year we see this reflected in their own performance work. Highlights this year included trips to Curve to see Run, Rebel, a physical theatre piece about cultural constraints and independence, and The Mountaintop, an imagined encounter between Martin Luther King and a motel maid on the night before he was assassinated. The Year 7 pupils once again went to London to see the amazing spectacle of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, enjoying the opportunity to learn about design elements and stage effects. We were also delighted to welcome playwright Mark Wheelwright back to LGS to work with our Year 11





GCSE Drama students on his play *I Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won't Die*, their set text in the written examination. As always, he elicited thoughtful and imaginative work from them, bringing the text to life over the day.

Our **GCSE Drama and A Level Theatre Studies** students continue to produce creative and entertaining work of their own. The Year 10s demonstrated excellent physical theatre skills through their devised pieces, from the acrobatic darkness of *Playing With Fire* to the slapstick and physical comedy of *Mystery Murder 3*. Year 11 Scripted pieces were similarly diverse, with extracts written across 70 years, including classic works by Harold Pinter, Edward Albee and Caryl Churchill, alongside less well-known plays such as *Pizza Man* and *Honour*. The Year 13 scripted and devised performance evening was one of two halves, beginning with the tension and threat in *Macbeth*, and ending with the Paper Birds-inspired *Stay-At-Home*, highlighting gender inequality and satirising the TikTok Tradwife trend. Thank you to Ella Kitchen, Harvir Johal, and especially Pol Macip Porter (who stepped in at the eleventh hour) for performing as non-examined candidates. The final examined

performance of the year came from the Year 12 students who performed their reinterpretation of John Osborne's *The Entertainer*, in the style of Bertolt Brecht. It was a very challenging task, which they executed very well, placing the domestic affairs of Archie Rice alongside the socio-political climate of the Suez Canal Crisis and Britain's position within world affairs.

The year ended, as always, with Prep's annual Play-in-a-Day. This year's show, *The Invention*, was based around the benefits and necessities



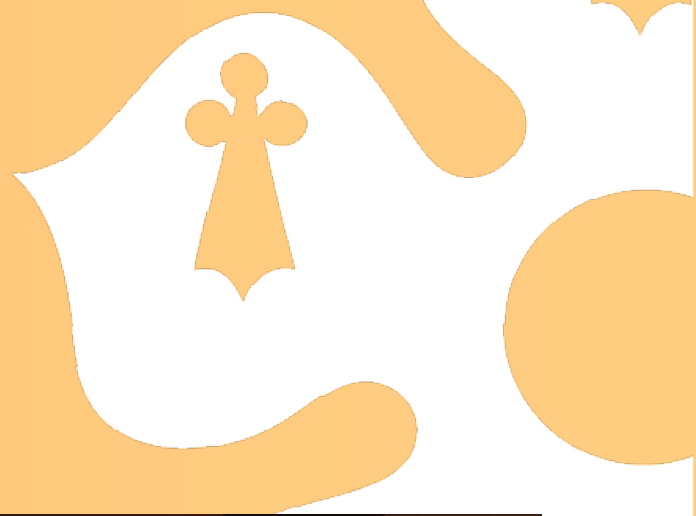


“THE
AUDIENCE
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of good communication and overcoming the At the end of the year there was something obstacles that make us shy away from open of a ‘change of cast’ in the department. We communication. This was a very apt piece were delighted to welcome Mr Thurlow to the in a world where digital communication is team of LAMDA teachers, joining Mrs Garner growing, and face-to-face communication and Miss Leak to deliver Speech and Drama is more commonly avoided. Alongside the lessons to now well over 60 pupils. Dr Griffin, timely message was copious amounts of fun Head of English, has finally stepped back and energy, with the numbers Try Everything from teaching theory for the A Level Drama and Waving Through A Window two of the and Theatre course. We are very grateful highlights.

to him for his decades of dedication to the department and hours of additional help – on



trips, supervising audiences and so much more. Miss Adams, Head of Performance Drama, and I also leave LGS for new adventures, after 13 and 31 years respectively. We would like to say a very heartfelt thank you to the many hundreds of amazing pupils we have had the privilege to work with over the years, and to our fantastic colleagues who have supported our work in productions and performances. Whether you watched a show, built sets, gave out refreshments or offered words of encouragement, we are incredibly grateful and will miss you.

Very best of luck to you all – and enjoy the next Act!

Annette Hulme

HEAD OF ACADEMIC DRAMA

ART & DESIGN

Making a mark

“THIS YEAR’S ENTRIES WERE EXCEPTIONAL”

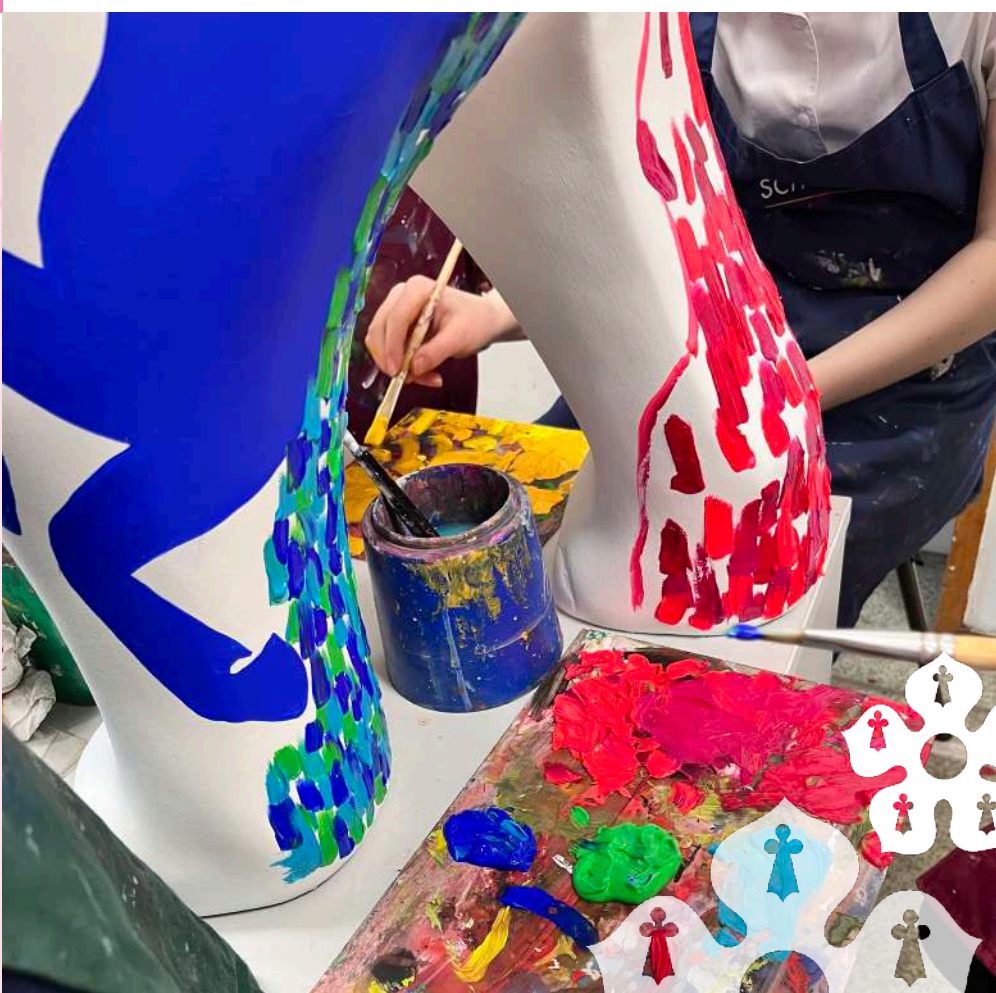


It has been another dynamic year for the **Art & Design department**, full of activity both in and out of the studio. Alongside our lively lunchtime and after-school clubs, students have embraced a wide range of creative opportunities.

Year 10 Fine Art and Ceramics students visited **Calke Abbey** to launch their portfolio work on surface, texture and pattern. The atmospheric, partially decayed house offered a perfect setting for photography and sketching, while the gardens provided a rich source of botanical inspiration.

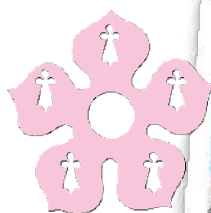
Each winter, students compete to design the school's official Christmas card – always a festive highlight. This year's entries were exceptional, but **Nieve Heslop** took first place with her heartwarming scene of a Christmas tree and dog curled up by the fire.

The annual Art & Design residential trip took us to **Barcelona** for a long weekend of exploration and inspiration. Students from



Years 10 to 13 explored the city's rich creative landscape, including Las Ramblas, La Sagrada Familia, the Museu Picasso and the Museu Nacional D'Art De Catalunya. Highlights included an enamel pendant workshop at Poble Espanyol and the wonders of Park Guell.

Back at school, we were thrilled to welcome internationally exhibiting local artist, **Paul Wright**, for this year's Saturday workshop. He offered GCSE and A Level students valuable insight, knowledge and one-to-one feedback to support their externally set assignments.



Zatie-May Faulkner

HEAD OF ART

DESIGN &

Technology



ICE CREAM & INGENUITY

It has been another busy and exciting year in the Design & Technology department.

Our workshops remain a hive of activity at lunchtimes, with open sessions helping the students make great progress on their projects.

Our **Greenpower** teams have had a year of valuable learning experiences. The race at Mallory Park did not go to plan: a puncture and two overheated motors meant we ended the day on the recovery vehicle. However, an ice cream sale raised an impressive £580, enough

to buy a new motor and tyres for the next race at Dunsfold, home of the Top Gear test track. Despite the setbacks, the team proudly won the Best Portfolio award for documenting every change (even the ones that made the car worse!) and learning from their mistakes.

A highlight this year was hosting the annual **Rotary Technology Tournament**. We welcomed 120 students from 12 schools for a day of problem-solving and design challenges. Our Year 10 team worked brilliantly under pressure and took second place - we're already aiming for top spot next time!

We also continued supporting the Junior School with exciting D&T opportunities. They designed and built two bridges as part of our **Technology Challenge Day** - one fixed and another that could open to let boats pass. It was a fun and engaging day of creativity and teamwork.

Trips once again brought classroom learning to life. Year 10s toured the **BMW Mini factory** to see thousands of robots in action as part of a Just In Time manufacturing system. Year 12s visited the **Triumph factory** and the **Loughborough Bell Foundry**, where they saw traditional sand casting still in use – a fascinating insight into how technologies change.

Finally, congratulations to Jack Jones, our Arkwright Scholar for the year – we are excited to see which company sponsors him.



FOOD & TEXTILES

From Stilton to stitching



It has been a lively and enriching year for Food & Textiles at LGS.

Year 10 students enjoyed a trip to **Barnes Dairy Farm** in Somersby, where they learned about milking and the cheese-making process. The farm specialises in Stilton and, to their credit, every student gave even the strongest varieties a try - with mixed reactions!

A big well done to Ronak Ohri in Year 9, who took part in the **Springboard FutureChef** cookery competition. He prepared a delicious 'Pasta al Bazio' dish and received valuable feedback from the judges.

In Textiles, the Key Stage 3 club worked on a truly meaningful project: designing and sewing dresses for the **Dress a Girl Around the World** charity. These handmade garments were sent to girls in Africa, and it

was heartwarming to see photos of them being worn. The dresses were also showcased and modelled by our infants at the **Cultural Fashion Show**.

Looking ahead, we continue to invest in our Textiles environment. The classroom is set for a refresh, and we are reviewing and updating our project work to reflect new techniques and ideas.

Duke of Edinburgh 2024-2025



Duke of Edinburgh Gold



DUKE OF EDINBURGH BRONZE





John Watson

Headmaster & Principal

2019 - 2025

Mr Watson is stepping down as Headmaster and Principal after 6 years at the helm. Jialu Li and Harriet Firth spoke to him about his career, passions and reflections as he prepares for retirement.

Apart from being our headmaster, what are your other interests in life?

During term time, my school family takes up most of my time, but my own family comes first. I love travelling, countryside walks (especially if there's cake and tea at the end), cycling, and going to the theatre. I've got a gardening project lined up this weekend and I enjoy DIY. When I'm no longer a Head, I'll definitely have plenty to keep me content and busy.

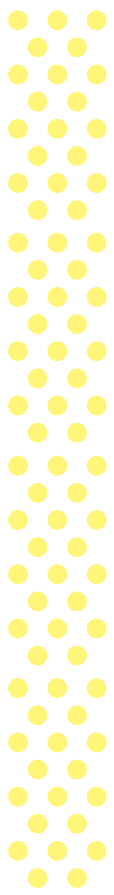
What first drew you to teaching?

Honestly, I didn't plan on becoming a teacher. As part of my degree in French and Latin,

I spent a year in France as a language assistant and found that I really enjoyed working with young people. When I returned, I took a job as an unqualified teacher, completed my training shortly after, and it just felt right – I never looked back.

Why are you so passionate about your subject?

Pupils deserve teachers who genuinely love what they teach. I've always had a passion for modern languages and classics – they fascinated me at school and university, and I wanted to share that. Language helps us understand culture, which is incredibly important in today's world. Our Culture Day



at school is a great example – it celebrates our differences and encourages empathy. Languages open doors to understanding people and the world more deeply.

In your previous school, we heard you abseiled for charity. What would you say are the other highlights of your career?

That abseil came from a casual chat with pupils – I agreed to join them, thinking it was a joke, but they held me to it! I'm glad I did it. Honestly, there are so many highlights, big and small, every week. The real joy of this job comes from seeing people thrive – staff and pupils alike. It's a role full of privilege and meaning, and I'll retire with head and heart full of memories.

What attracted you to LGS?

I felt the school's energy and ambition straight away. The pupils had a natural confidence – not arrogant, just grounded and self-assured – which I really admired. There's a shared drive here, a collective desire to be our best, and that extends to the staff too. It felt like a place where I could work with others who shared my values and aspirations for young people.

What do you think you will miss most about Leicester Grammar School?

The people, without a doubt. I can have big dreams as a head, but it's the pupils and staff who bring them to life. Seeing what they achieve together has been one of the greatest privileges of my career, and that's what I'll miss the most.

Why would you recommend teaching?

Because it's transformative. You help shape the future, guide young people, and make a real impact. It's a career full of purpose, and for me, that's incredibly fulfilling.

What have you learned from your years of teaching?

To always keep a sense of humour. Working with teenagers makes it hard not to smile, even on tough days. Being surrounded by such energy and optimism keeps you grounded and hopeful. Yes, there are challenges, but the positives of teaching – seeing growth, success, and joy – far outweigh them.

What will you do with your time once you have retired?

I'll stay active. My wife, who's a deputy head, is retiring too, so we're planning to travel a bit and also do some volunteering – something I did a lot of when I was younger and found deeply rewarding. I'll also continue contributing to education. We're hoping to get another Labrador, having had a couple before, and I'm looking forward to having more time for family and not always being the one in charge!

If you could give a piece of advice to pupils, what would it be?

You only get one shot at education, so make the most of it. Use your talents, build your character, and take every opportunity. Stay curious, be kind, and never stop learning – you'll never regret investing in yourself and others.

If you could give a piece of advice to the school, what would it be?

Always prioritise being a happy, caring community. Academic success and wellbeing go hand in hand – they're complementary. When pupils and staff feel supported, everything else falls into place. If people feel proud to be here and valued, the rest will follow naturally.

Troy Thacker

PE

1992 - 2025



What's your favourite memory from LGS?

There are so many funny moments and memories that filled me with pride. One that stands out was a member of staff who drove a Porsche 911 soft-top into the old site, music blaring and hair flowing. I thought it would be a great idea to fill his car with plastic packing chips – though he didn't see the funny side!

There have also been emotional moments: taking the school to the final 8 in Manchester, and seeing all three of my kids go through the school. The day my youngest left was particularly emotional.

If your time at LGS were an ice cream flavour, what would it be?

Probably pistachio – my favourite – mixed with rum and raisin, which I'm not too keen on. Flashes of things I really like, with the odd bits you just have to work through.

What are your plans for retirement?

To fully enjoy life that little bit more. Turn off the alarms, travel in the camper van, spend more time with the grandkids – and I'd like to swim in the sea every day for a year.

What are you going to miss most?

The people. We're a close-knit department, and I've made lots of close friends here. The students too - sharing laughs and playing in teams takes things to another level.

Mr Troy Thacker is retiring after 33 years at LGS, where he has been a much-loved member of the PE department. Arnav Bhavsar and Arvind Kulkarni spoke to him about his highlights, mischief and retirement goals.

Which did you prefer: playing or teaching?

That's a hard question. There is absolutely no substitute for the adrenaline rush of playing - running out in front of 82,000 people at Twickenham was an incredible buzz. But I never felt I reached my full potential because of injury. So, trying to inspire others became a real driver for me.



Annette Hulme

Drama

1994 - 2025

Ms Annette Hulme is leaving LGS after 31 years as a drama teacher. Siyana Kotecha and Riya Karwal spoke to her about her favourite memories and the advice she'd give for life beyond the stage.

If you could time travel to relive one of the school productions or plays, which would it be?

Anything that I directed with Mr Baxter. He was an absolute legend. We did so many shows together. He started at Leicester Grammar in 1994 as a part-time maths teacher, but also did the set design - that's how we met. Eventually, we began co-directing plays.

One of my favourite memories is when we staged Cahoot's Macbeth by Tom Stoppard. It's set in a country where theatre is banned, so actors have to perform secretly. In one scene, the three witches had just finished when Mr Baxter stopped them and said, "When you exit, don't walk... evaporate." They lit up. "Yes, sir! We will evaporate the hell out of this exit!" He had a magical way of inspiring students -he asked

for the impossible, and they gave it to him.

What would your final "curtain call" speech to your students be?

I always tell my Year 8s how painfully shy I was. I'd blush just putting my hand up. My parents wouldn't let me do drama - I had to do German and chemistry, which I was terrible at! If you'd told me back then I'd end up teaching drama, I'd have run a mile. But drama isn't about being Oscar-worthy. It's about being your best self. The skills you learn - teamwork, confidence, presenting ideas - they'll help you for the rest of your life, whatever you do. And honestly, I was never just interested in top marks - it's the journey that matters: pushing yourself, growing, stepping out of your comfort zone. That's what really counts.

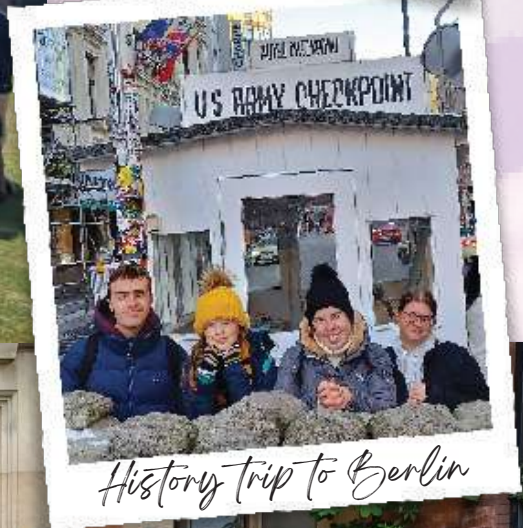
S P R I N G



YEAR 8 ISLE OF WIGHT TOUR



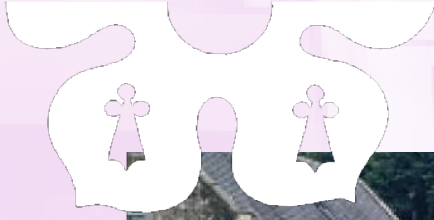
History trip to Riga



History trip to Berlin



YEAR 7 PGL



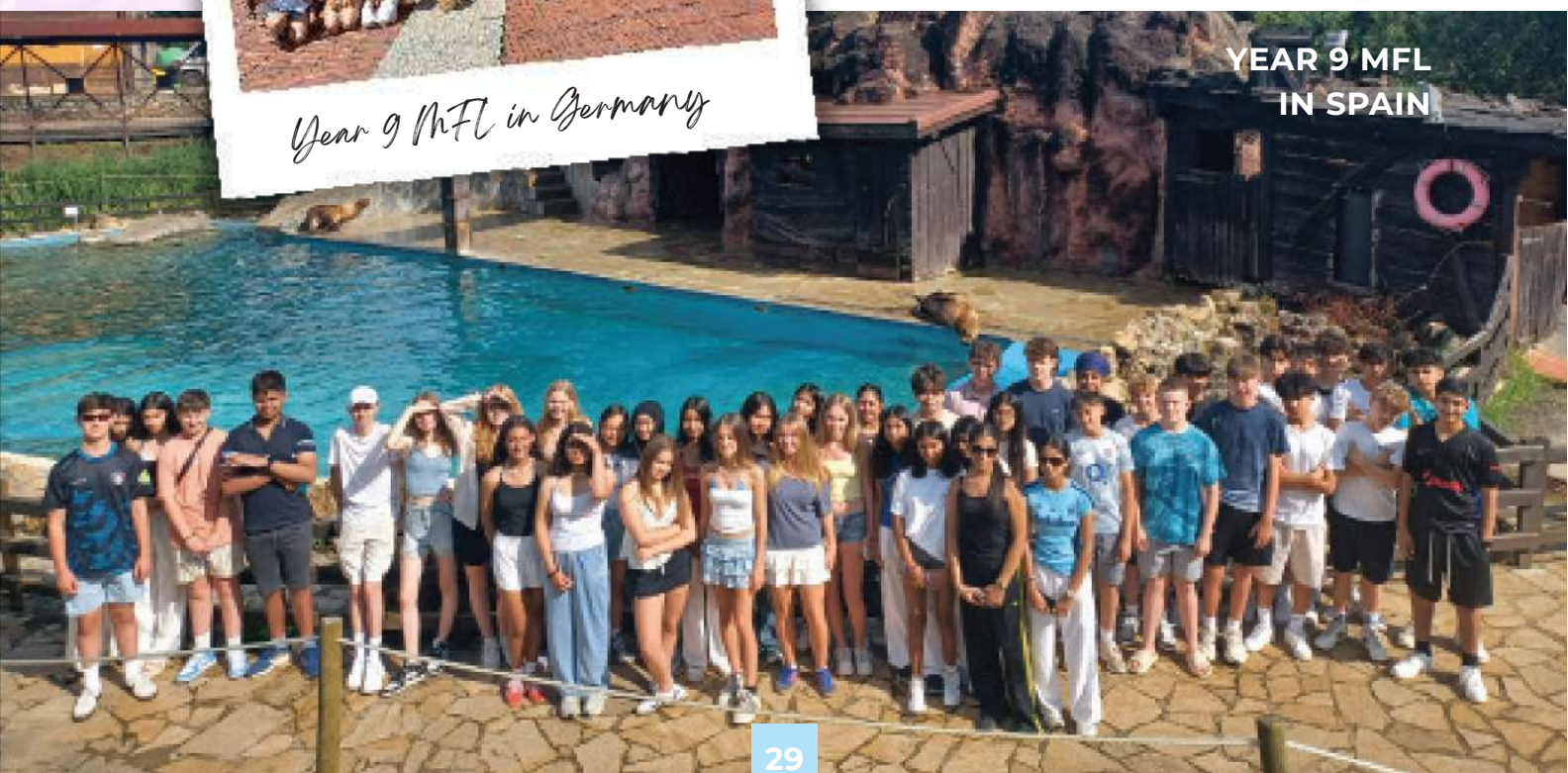
YEAR 8 HADRIAN'S WALL TRIP



Year 9 MFL in Germany



Year 9 MFL in France



YEAR 9 MFL
IN SPAIN



SOUTH AFRICA SPORTS TOUR

ART TRIP TO SPAIN



COSTA RICA TRIP JULY 2025



Year 12 Biology Trip



YEAR 12 BIOLOGY TRIP TO WALES

Amanda McHugh

History

2018 - 2025



Amanda McHugh is leaving LGS after 6 years in the History department. Samah Khan and Zahra Hardman spoke to her about curiosity, joy and what comes next.

What first inspired you to teach history?

It started in childhood. My dad travelled the world when it looked very different, and I loved hearing his stories. Our family holidays were never sitting on a beach; we were always exploring historical sites and different cultures. That curiosity was the spark. Then at school I had two incredible history teachers who made me want to study it properly and dig deeper. That's when I knew.

Which are you most proud of at LGS?

Introducing the fight for women's suffrage to the Year 9 curriculum. It's essential – you can't fully understand today's world without it.

What advice would you give to students who want to do history?

Travel. Explore global history, not just British. It broadens your thinking. I've got a quote above my desk from Theodore Roosevelt: "The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.". If you only look through a British lens, you miss so much.

What's the biggest thing you've learnt from your students?

Joy. Seeing the enthusiasm in Year 7 grow into deep interest is wonderful. When they continue at GCSE or A Level, that's so rewarding. I still keep in touch with many former students and now learn from them.

Any trips or clubs that stand out?

Definitely Mr Allen's battlefields trip. I forgot I was a teacher – I learnt so much and had to stop myself shouting "Pick me!" in the evening discussions. He is an amazing teacher.

What are your plans next - will history still feature?

Absolutely. Maybe some projects with Mr Allen, plus tennis, travel skiing and Rome with my son. I can't wait!





Sarah Yeomans

Politics

2006 - 2025

Sarah Yeomans is leaving LGS after 19 years teaching Politics. She spoke about her proudest moments, what she'll miss, and the question she thinks everyone should keep asking.

What was your proudest moment at LGS? Words of wisdom?

My proudest moments have always centred on my students – helping them to achieve their potential. Other than that – the very rare occasions when I've managed to get a question right in the Common Room Friday break-time quiz.

Don't take things at face value and always ask yourself *cui bono?* who benefits? – it provides the answer to many of life's questions.

What will you miss when you leave?

The friendship and good humour of some of my colleagues and the unfailing kindness of the support staff.

What won't you miss when you leave?

The long drive – especially in the winter.

**“ALWAYS ASK
YOURSELF CUI
BONO? WHO
BENEFITS?”**

YEAR 11 PROM





Rachel Adams

Drama

2014 - 2025



Miss Adams is leaving LGS after 11 years in the Drama department. Zahra Hardman and Samah Khan spoke to her about her inspirations, memories and what comes next.

What inspired you to teach drama?

My own drama teachers. They were superb actors and inspiring teachers who helped us thrive. Drama teachers educate students to be diplomatic, team players and humane. I had the best – and I’ve tried to offer the same experience to my students.

What’s your favourite LGS drama memory?

Far too many! I’ll treasure academic lessons, but it’s the production process I’ll remember

most – the shared problem-solving, the nerves and excitement. Opening night for *Oliver!* was unforgettable. It was our biggest show with the largest crew. The camaraderie was fantastic.

What advice would you give students considering drama?

Do it! It builds confidence and emotional intelligence. But if you want to be an actor, be sure it’s your passion – the industry is tough, and drive is essential.

Is there a lesson you’ll never forget?

A prep student once played a hilariously unqualified doctor. Not intentionally funny – but completely brilliant.

What’s the biggest lesson your students taught you?

To enjoy the process and let go of perfectionism. Collaboration is a lesson in itself.

Are there any plays you wish we’d done?

Many! I love darker musicals like *Cabaret* and *Les Misérables*, but we always chose what suited the whole school.

What are your plans – will drama still be part of them?

Definitely. I’m moving into communication coaching and hope to stage new immersive work - maybe even start a repertory company.

Heather Feasey

Geography

2011 - 2025



Heather Feasey is leaving LGS after 14 years in the Geography department. Kiyon Raja and Adam Bobat spoke to her about memories, field trips and her love of stationery.

What's your favourite memory of LGS?

I have many happy memories! If I had to pick one, it would be a Geography fieldwork trip to Hunstanton. It was a beautiful day – 'Sunny Hunny' living up to its name. We had an umbrella up on the beach while doing sand dune profiles, with students who thought they were on a beach holiday rather than a study trip. Ice creams and sea air on a school day is always a treat

What will you miss most about working here?

The friendly atmosphere and the lovely students and staff. It's true that no two

days are ever the same. Although the years can blur together, you build up a stock of classroom faces and memories that are unforgettable. I might not miss the busy car park and playing car-Tetris at peak hours though!

What topics are your favourite to teach and why?

Coasts and rivers. Growing up in Cape Town, the sea was on my doorstep and mountain streams were close by. Some physical geography can be tricky, so it's exciting when students grasp it.

Who's your best friend at the school and why?

I've been lucky to work with so many lovely colleagues. Miss Mould supported me hugely when I started. Mrs Sharp keeps me laughing every day, and Miss Moore was my neighbour before she was my colleague. My whole department (including RS) has been brilliant - I'll miss them all.

If you weren't a geography teacher, what would you do?

Probably living the dream in reprographics! With my stationery obsession, I'd also happily work in a Paperchase or Waterstones!

THE PREP

2024-2025

BIG SCHOOL CAMP

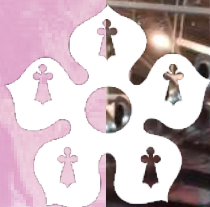


New Walk Museum



GREAT GLEN FIELD TRIP





ICT



Play in a day

YOUNG VOICES



David Crawford

Mathematics

1997 - 2025



Dr David Crawford is retiring after 28 years as a maths teacher at LGS. Emily Boddy and Jasper Mayer caught up with him to talk about laughter, learning – and nearly becoming a vet.

What's your favourite memory of working at the school?

Probably the first sports trip to Australia. It was a long way. I don't sleep well on planes, and when we went out for a meal that evening, I face-planted into my food. That was memorable!

If you weren't a maths teacher, what would you do?

Well, I wanted to be a vet, but then decided I didn't like blood and probably couldn't put down an ill puppy. So that dream disap-

peared quite quickly. I've never really thought about what else I'd have been, teaching has always been enough for me.

What's your favourite topic to teach?

I don't think I have a favourite topic, but I do enjoy teaching Year 7s who want to get involved, answer questions and have a go. Sometimes, by Year 10, there can be some cynicism, with students asking, "Why do we have to do this?" We should enjoy learning for the sake of learning – not just because we have to.

What will you miss most about working here?

I don't expect to miss the marking, the reports, the parents' evenings and the options evenings! But this job is constantly different and I laugh a lot – even if I don't always laugh at the right things! I remember occasional things that get said in the classroom and inside I'm falling over laughing, but I have to not actually fall over because the students often don't realise what they've said. It's also amusing when you crack a joke and see three people sniggering, while the others are all confused because it has sailed over their heads.

Elaine Nisbet

Food & Nutrition

1996 - 2025



Ms Elaine Nisbet is retiring after 29 years at LGS, where she has taught Food and Nutrition and helped shape the department into what it is today. Niamh Austin and Charlotte Kelman asked her about her memories, plans and what she'll miss most.

What's been one of your favourite memories from your time working at LGS?

One of the biggest things for me was starting the GCSE course – I put a lot of time into that.

I've got memories from the old school too. I used to come into town every day and park at the Holiday Inn, and get our ticket validated, so we could actually get home again! The

children used to move around the site and had assemblies in the cathedral – it had a Hogwarts, Harry Potterish feel.

And then there was covid. I was teaching from my kitchen at home with a camera set up, doing demos while students cooked along at home. I think they quite enjoyed it - it was something different on the timetable for them.

Have you got any plans for your retirement?

My husband's already retired, so we'll have more time together and hopefully travel. I've never been to Australia or New Zealand, and my children say I must see the Far East! I'd like to spend more time with them too – one's in York and the other in London. I also enjoy gardening and want to do more exercise and fitness.

What will you miss most about working here?

My colleagues - especially my technician Angie – and the students. I'll really miss the banter we have together, especially with the Year 11s once I've got to know them well.

BUSINESS

Language Champions

In November, six Year 11 students took part in the Business Language Champions European Challenge event in Birmingham, competing against schools from across the Midlands.

As part of the competition, they were tasked with rebranding Jelly Babies to appeal to a European market. Originally called Peace Babies in the UK to celebrate the end of the First World War, they were renamed Jelly Babies in 1953 after production had stopped during the Second World War.

The students designed a mock trade stand, presented their pitch, making a call to a buyer and sent a follow-up email, as well as creating a flyer in a foreign language. It was a fantastic opportunity to see how their language skills could be used in a real-world business environment and to inspire them to consider studying modern foreign languages at A Level.

Three of our students went on to win the competition with their product Los Reyes Felices, aimed at a Spanish market. Their concept cleverly considered cultural differences, drawing on Spain's celebration of Epiphany and the tradition of the Three Wise Men - Los Reyes Magos.



HOUSES

MASTERS THIS YEAR'S MIDLAND BANK CUP WINNERS



Masters were the ones to beat this year, lifting the Midland Bank Cup for the first time since 2016. Their campaign began with a clever house drama performance – a witty mashup of fairy tales devised by Rishan Raja (Y13) – which delighted the audience. They then picked up victories in tennis, darts and girls' cricket. Consistently finishing second in many other events, Masters showed that steady effort and team spirit pay off.

Judges claimed the most individual wins and finished runners-up overall, with successes in general knowledge, singing, spelling bee, boys' hockey, badminton, swimming, table tennis and athletics. They also topped sports day – a sun-soaked celebration of energy, enthusiasm and school spirit. Year 12 supported brilliantly, many helping raise funds for this year's house charity, Menphys. Over £1,200 was raised, with Dukes and Vice Chancellors leading the way.



Dukes came third, leading the charity fundraising and winning rugby, netball, mental maths and cross country. The Tom Ellis Cross Country, held during exam week, offered a welcome break from academic rigour. Section winners Lucy Free (J Y10), Isaac Mohan (V Y12), Melak Majeed (V Y9), Benji Dubois (D Y10), Freya Ives (M Y8) and Run Ze Zhou (M Y8) all blazed around the course with remarkable speed.



'A sun-soaked celebration of energy, enthusiasm and school spirit.'



Vice Chancellors notched up wins in chess, boys' football, girls' hockey, Just a Minute, mixed basketball and boys' cricket. Somewhat unexpectedly, they missed out on general knowledge despite Alice Hawkins (Y10) continuing to impress with her quick thinking.

A huge thank you to everyone who stepped out of their comfort zone to try something new, and to our brilliant house captains and heads of house, whose enthusiasm and leadership set a brilliant example for all.



THE LORD LIEUTENANT'S YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR

AWARDS



This year, two of our students were recognised among Leicestershire's finest at the Lord Lieutenant's Young Person of the Year awards.

The programme celebrates young people's remarkable contributions across courage, leadership, art and volunteering. From submissions across the county, four finalists in each category were presented with certificates and prizes at an awards ceremony, where the overall young person of the year was also announced. **Grace Dhesi** and **Shivani Patel** share their stories.

Grace Dhesi

WINNER OF THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER AWARD & YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR

I started this year determined to seize every opportunity that came my way: joining the Change Group to run activities like friendship bracelet making and cupcake decorating, helping younger years with wellbeing; supporting antibullying, dropping into Year 7 forms to talk about standing up to unkindness; and joining the charity committee, raising money for books for primary schools, Peak District Mountain Rescue, and the YMCA through bake sales, book sales and shoebox appeals.



SHIVANI PATEL



GRACE DHESI

On top of this, the school enabled me to train as a student mentor, I ran fun STEM sessions for Prep students (think lava lamps and a chromatography whodunnit!), and volunteered as a carer, an activities volunteer at my local hospital, a cadet corporal and community first aider with St John Ambulance. When Miss Hadfield nominated me for young volunteer of the year, I was stunned. Being selected as a finalist was already such an honour, and attending the ceremony with my family to meet so many courageous, selfless young people was unforgettable. When they announced I'd won not just young volunteer but also the overall award, I couldn't believe it – and wish in hindsight I hadn't yelled **"WHAT?!"** in shock!

I'm so grateful to the teachers, friends and family, whose support enables me to give back to the community that's shown such kindness to me.

Shivani Patel

FINALIST FOR THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER AWARD

Being named as a finalist for young volunteer of the year was a huge honour. My volunteering journey began when I cut 13 inches off my hair and raised £200 for the Little Princess Trust, which provides wigs for children with cancer.

I went on to join St John Ambulance and became a cadet first aider at events like Leicester Tigers matches and Pride. As my confidence grew, I began leading sessions at our weekly meetings, becoming a cadet corporal and then cadet sergeant. After completing my bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh awards, I became a DofE young leader for Leicestershire and Rutland, mentoring others and running expeditions.

I also trained as a volunteer radio presenter at Rangoli Radio in Yorkshire, later co-creating Save Lives On Air with St John Ambulance, a youth-led show teaching basic first aid to listeners worldwide, using visuals to aid learning.

Alongside this, I volunteered at school in the charity committee, change and anti-bullying groups, and mentored in STEM subjects. None of this would have been possible without the incredible support of the school and St John Ambulance. I am immensely grateful for all these opportunities, and encourage everyone to take part in everything they can, every chance they get.

CHAPEL

“I had a very natural faith growing up. When I went to Eton College, that was challenged by my chapel experience. I thought, I’ve obviously got it wrong because God wears a cassock and speaks in Latin. Since then it has been a lifetime of unravelling” - Bear Grylls

Many will recognise something in Grylls’ reflection: the feeling that faith must look or sound a certain way. At LGS our Chapel Foundation is rooted in the ‘high church’ tradition, and there is value in the beauty and symbolism that brings. I am indebted to the chapel team, Dr Ainge, the Music Department, and Mr Stagg and his team, for making this possible.

Yet faith, in its truest sense, should never be confused with robes or ritual. We are a multi faith community, and Chapel is just one part of our commitment to inclusion, respect and reflection, and we strive hard to support students and staff of all faiths and none. Christianity teaches that God is relational, relevant and loving (“for God so loved the world that he gave...”). So the life of Chapel goes beyond the formal services, and is in the weekly voluntary meetings, quiet prayer, and ongoing pastoral support.



So don’t be misled by the ‘theatricals’ – they should never obscure the heart of what Chapel is about.



Community

Service

a listening ear. This experience has taught me patience, empathy, and how to communicate effectively with individuals facing memory loss and mobility challenges."

Divine Ibeji

Divine Ibeji said: "During my community service placement, I had a truly rewarding and enjoyable experience. I helped Junior School staff organise activities for the students, helped with marking and reading and built meaningful relationships with my fellow volunteers. It developed my teamwork and sense of responsibility, and enriched my understanding of the LGS community. As a new student to the school, I loved being able to give back to such a wonderful and positive environment."

Community service at LGS gives Sixth Form students the opportunity to give something back by volunteering in the local community – developing confidence, empathy and independence along the way. The scheme has continued to flourish this year with almost 40 placements secured.

Zahra Hardman

Zahra Hardman shares her experience: "For my community service placement, I volunteer at a care home where I provide companionship and help organise enjoyable activities such as sing-alongs, quizzes, and gardening. By visiting and chatting with the residents each week, I've formed genuine friendships which have been truly heartwarming and rewarding. For those who receive fewer visitors, I've come to understand the value of simply being present and offering



CAREERS FAIR

2025



September saw the return of the biennial LGS careers fair – bigger and busier than ever. With 70 exhibitors in attendance, students and families explored a huge range of opportunities, from top universities to local employers and global firms.

The university line-up included Russell Group institutions such as Exeter, Durham and Warwick, alongside more specialist options like Falmouth University for the creative arts. Several international universities also took part. A wide range of professional organisations were also on hand to offer insights into different sectors, routes into specific careers and the qualifications or experience needed to get there.

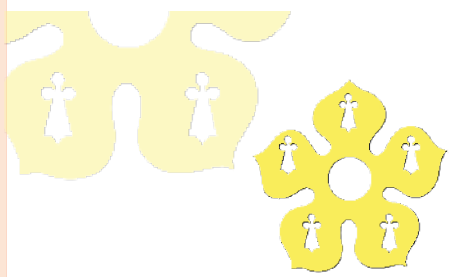
Among the headline employers were Rolls Royce, Selfridges, Weetabix and Fisher German, along with a host of local firms including Samworth Brothers, TGW Ltd, PRP Civil Engineers and Rowleys Accountants. Some of these have since gone on to offer placements through our Year 12 work

experience programme. One popular stand was hosted by OL Adam Lewis, who left LGS in 2024 to start a degree apprenticeship with Nestlé – and returned to represent his new employer.

With its lively, marketplace-style atmosphere, the fair gave students from LGS, LGS Stoneygate and local state schools a chance to speak directly to representatives from all sectors. Younger students and their families typically use the evening to explore possibilities, ask questions and gather inspiration. For sixth formers, it's also a valuable opportunity to discuss work experience options, make informed decisions about university and career paths, or connect with employers actively recruiting for degree apprenticeships.

We're always keen to hear from organisations interested in future fairs or offering work experience.

Contact Clare Scott, LGS Careers Leader, at scottc@leicestergrammar.org.uk



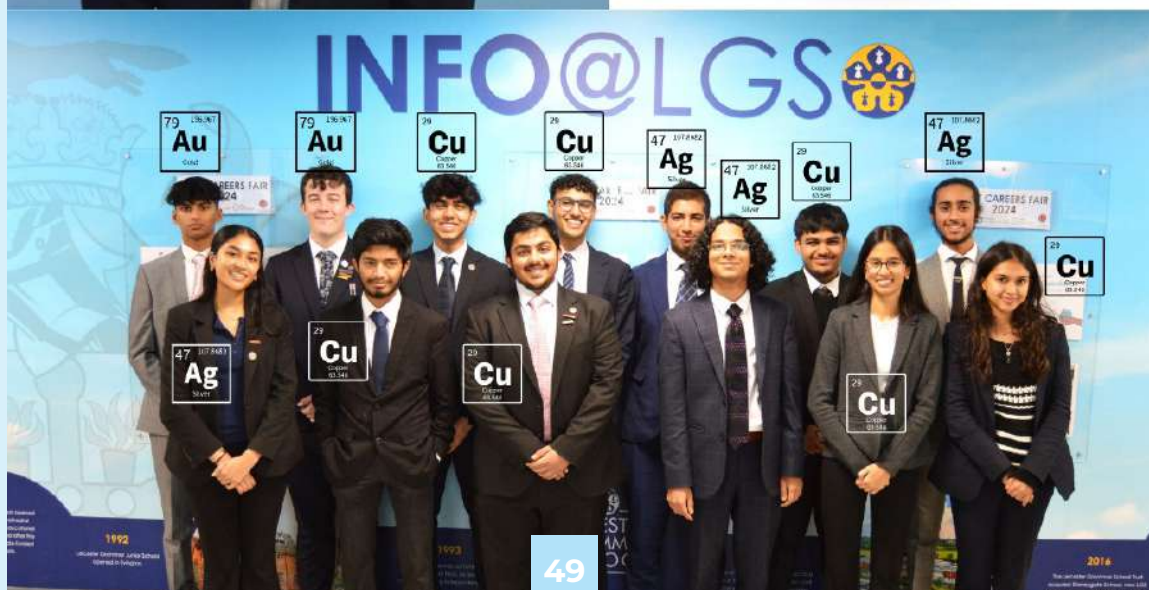
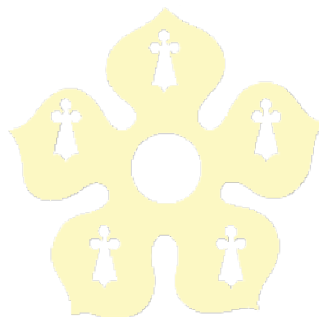
CHEMISTRY

Stars Shine

Each year, LGS students put in an impressive showing in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge for Year 12 and the Chemistry Olympiad round one for Year 13.

Congratulations to this year's Chemistry context, the modal mark across all participants Olympiad participants: Gold - Joey England, was just 8! Over Easter, Lily was invited to Avi Kotecha and Lily Porteous; and Silver - join 26 other top students for the round two Vashin Kaushik, Hasan Khwaja, Rushil Patel, theory and practical at Nottingham University. Zara Rizvi and Jodhvir Singh.

A special mention goes to **Lily Porteous**, who achieved a **Roentgenium Award in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge** - placing her in the top 0.5% of entrants. In the Olympiad, Lily didn't just earn a Gold, she was one of the top scorers in the country with an outstanding score of 74 out of 83 - to put that in



EMBRACE

Celebrating belonging



This year has marked another significant step forward in our school's ongoing journey to embed inclusion in daily life. At the heart of this work lies a simple belief: everyone should feel they belong here.

Our **EMBRACE** group has worked tirelessly to raise awareness, suggest improvements, and ensure student voice is at the heart of our work. They have played a central role in assemblies and awareness events throughout the year – including Black History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day, International Men's Day, and International Women's Day, sparking important conversations and building greater understanding across our community. Two of this year's highlights were **Culture Day** and the **Cultural Fashion Show** – vibrant events that brought our community together to celebrate identity, heritage and the richness of our diversity.

Crucially, our commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion is about more than events. It's about lasting change. We've seen students who were once quiet or uncertain stepping into leadership roles; conversations between students that show growing empathy and cultural awareness; and teachers create classroom spaces where all feel safe to share their thoughts and experiences.

Looking ahead, we're excited to keep building on this foundation. Plans are in place to expand our student advocacy groups, deepen our curriculum review, and strengthen links with families and the local community.

Inclusion isn't a one-off initiative – it's a commitment, a culture and a mindset. We're proud of the progress made and incredibly grateful to everyone – students, staff, families, and supporters – who continue to make our school inclusive, welcoming, and joyful.



CULTURE DAY

Culture Day was a vibrant, joyful celebration of the incredible diversity within our school – and a powerful demonstration of our commitment to inclusion.

Students came to school in traditional dress, brought in food from their culture to share, and spoke about their heritage, language and family traditions. Corridors were filled with colour, laughter and the wonderful aroma of dishes from around the world. Clothing ranged from saris and salwar kameez to kilts, hanboks, dashikis and embroidered blouses – each telling a story of identity and pride.

Thank you to all of our families who gave so generously of their culinary skills. Sharing food is one of the oldest human rituals – and it created an opportunity for connection and appreciation. Students and staff alike discovered new flavours, asked questions and learned more about one another in a relaxed and informal way.

Cultural Fashion Show



Led by our Y12 EMBRACE team, the Cultural Fashion Show was a stunning celebration of identity, heritage, and self-expression.

Held in St Nicholas Hall with fantastic support from the student Tech Team, the show was entirely student-led and featured students from all years – modelling, choreographing, organising music, designing publicity and presenting.

More than just a catwalk, the show combined dress, music, and movement in a celebration of identity, with a standout dancing performance from Liabah in Y7.

What made the show so special was its inclusivity. Some students wore outfits from their own culture; others chose to reflect the heritage of their friends. There was a profound sense of solidarity and mutual appreciation.

ACTIVITIES WEEK

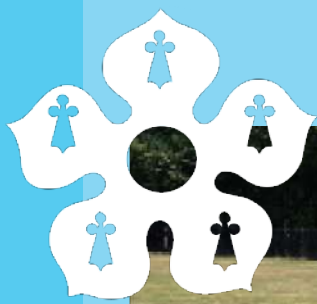


PREP'S PLAY-IN-A-DAY



Year 9 travelled to Germany





UB Combined Match



YEAR 10 TEAM BUILDING





Over the past year, the Old Leicestrians community has seen a number of developments aimed at strengthening engagement and modernising how we keep in touch.

A major step was moving from a printed annual newsletter to a digital termly edition, now shared through email and social media.

Social media has continued to help our alumni stay connected. The new OL Instagram page has attracted over 500 followers, while a previously dormant LinkedIn group was revitalised, offering another way for former LGS students to keep in touch.

In-person events also feature strongly. In December, the Class of 2024 returned to LGS to collect their A Level certificates and catch up with former classmates and staff. In May, our annual London drinks at The Betjeman Arms

welcomed OLS from across the capital. A special highlight was the Class of 2000's 25th anniversary reunion at Leicester's Richard III Centre – link to our original site – which saw an excellent turnout and plenty of stories shared.

There was also a new opportunity for the OL cricket team, who made their debut in the Cricketers Trophy tournament against St Peter's York. With excellent weather on the day, we look forward to future fixtures, including against our First XI.

 **FOLLOW @OLDLEICESTRIANS**



Emma Spencer

Catering Manager



What is most challenging about working at LGS?

The daily challenges are so varied – and that’s what I find most rewarding. You never know quite what’s around the corner. We work closely as a team to respond, but the biggest challenges are the tight time frames and the sheer volume of meals and snacks we prepare and serve each day.

Behind every smooth-running school day is a team of people quietly making it all happen – and few are more woven into daily life at LGS than catering manager, Mrs Spencer. From break-time snacks to freshly prepared lunches and special event spreads, her team keeps us well fed. Siyana Kotecha and Riya Karwal spoke to her to find out more.

How did you get into catering?

I was exposed to the hospitality world at a young age - rugby and cricket teas were a family affair, with everyone chipping in. At school, I loved cooking classes and discovered a real enjoyment of working in a kitchen. I also found I could support my friends with their culinary creations. That passion led me to catering college.

We make sure there’s a wide choice for students, with a salad bar, fresh sandwiches and wraps, homemade soups, baked potatoes, hot food choices and vegetarian options.

What is the secret to being an excellent catering manager?

For me, it’s always about putting the students first. As a team, we focus on creating a positive experience, using fresh ingredients to serve tasty meals. We take on board feedback from students through our food council meetings – which helps us improve and innovate.

I really value team input and encourage everyone to share any ideas or concerns. That collaboration helps guide the decisions I make.



LGS-SENIOR.ORG.UK

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