



ICENI ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026

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Principal's Post

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of this short half term, it's hard to believe just how swiftly the weeks have passed. Despite the limited time, the academy has been a hive of activity, and we have certainly managed to make every moment count.

Among the many highlights, our Year 11 'Study Hacks' Exams Preparation Evening stood out as a valuable and well-supported event. It was wonderful to see so many families engaging with the guidance on offer as students continue their journey towards the summer exams. Equally successful was our bingo fundraising night in support of the Year 11 prom. The atmosphere was lively, the competition spirited, and we are incredibly grateful to all who attended, donated, and contributed to making the evening such a positive community occasion.

Inside the classroom, our focus on effective strategies for checking understanding has been clearly evident. Walking around the academy, I have been delighted to see students immersed in a range of responsive learning activities, including mini whiteboard tasks, "I say, you say" routines, choral responses, and rich, probing questioning. These strategies strengthen students' grasp of key concepts and support teachers in adapting learning in real time—something that is wonderful to witness in action.

Another proud moment this half term has been watching our Year 11 drama students perform their exam pieces. The confidence, creativity, and commitment shown on stage were truly impressive, and we congratulate them on their hard work and the professionalism they brought to each performance.

Our House System continues to thrive, and it has been fantastic to see the enthusiasm with which students participate. The Knowledge Cup has quickly become a firm favourite, fostering healthy competition and a strong sense of belonging across the academy.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support. Your partnership plays a vital role in everything we do, and we greatly value the encouragement you give your children and the academy community as a whole.

I hope you all enjoy a restful break, and I look forward to welcoming students back for another exciting half term ahead.

Warm regards,
Richard Rushton
Principal



Update from Miss Staniforth

As we come to the end of a very busy and productive half term, I want to take a moment to celebrate the hard work, enthusiasm, and determination shown by our students across all year groups. It has been especially encouraging to see such strong engagement with our Checking for Understanding focus—students leaning into questioning, conversations, and feedback to deepen their learning. Thank you for the energy you've brought to classrooms each day.

Year 7

Our Year 7s have been an absolute delight this half term. Their engagement in lessons continues to shine, and it has been wonderful to see their growing confidence and curiosity as they settle further into secondary school life. Keep it up, Year 7—you are laying fantastic foundations.

Year 8

Year 8 have begun to look ahead to their transition into Year 9, starting to think about the next steps in their learning journey. As the options process approaches, it's brilliant to see them asking thoughtful questions and beginning to reflect on their strengths and interests. This early maturity will serve them well in the months ahead.

Year 9

A huge well done to Year 9, who have made some genuinely grown-up decisions during the options process. We are now working behind the scenes to shape the new curriculum pathways, and students can expect to receive their confirmed options in June. Their maturity and focus throughout this period have been impressive.

Year 10

Year 10 have shown real determination this half term, approaching their studies with focus as they build towards their mock exams in the summer term. Now is the time for consistency and steady effort—every lesson counts, and your hard work is starting to show.

Year 11

For Year 11, the final push is here. With exams beginning just four weeks after the Easter break, the next stretch is crucial. I strongly encourage all students to commit to 20 hours of revision per week from this point onwards. This investment of time and focus will make an enormous difference to confidence, performance, and outcomes in the summer. You are so close—keep going!

Thank you to all students and staff for your continued hard work, positivity, and resilience. I hope everyone enjoys a restful and well-earned Easter break.

Let's return ready for the next exciting chapter of the school year.



Update from Mr Morris

As we come to the end of what has been a truly positive and productive term, I would like to take a moment to celebrate the many achievements and opportunities our students have embraced.

This term saw the exciting return of our Knowledge Cup, with Cavell securing their first-ever win—an outstanding accomplishment and a moment of real pride for the house. Our Sports Cup, currently taking place in Week 8 of 14, continues to be extremely closely contested, showcasing the determination, teamwork, and competitive spirit of all students involved.

We have also enjoyed some exceptional creative and practical achievements. Our Year 11 GCSE Drama students delivered excellent performances that demonstrated both talent and dedication and made me laugh a lot. Meanwhile, Year 11 Food GCSE students produced dishes of an impressively high standard, some worthy of Michelin-star menus. It was fair to say I didn't need a lunch that week. Their effort, creativity and professionalism have been truly commendable.

This half term, our key focus has been on punctuality, as shared in our previous newsletter. We are delighted to report that this drive has resulted in a 49% reduction in lost learning time, a significant improvement that reflects the hard work of students and the support of families.

Our Student Leadership Team has also been working hard behind the scenes, exploring the next “big changes” they would like to implement across the academy. Current projects include improving outdoor seating for break and lunch, as well as enhancing our uniform options. I am pleased to confirm that students have now launched our new school gilets, a direct response to their request for an additional warm layer during colder months. They selected the style themselves to ensure it reflected both our community and our evolving uniform. The gilet is an optional item, priced at £25, designed to be worn under the blazer, and can be purchased via the Birds of Dereham website. The team is also exploring how this item may be incorporated during the summer months. They are now turning their attention to fundraising ideas to support the expansion of outdoor seating.



Looking ahead, next term we will be introducing morning line-ups for all year groups. Year 7 and Year 11 already participate, and other year groups undertake this on assembly days. Extending this practice daily will allow us to ensure a calm, purposeful start to the school day, address any issues promptly, and share key information clearly and consistently. We also anticipate this will further support improvements in punctuality to form time.

Next term will also see the launch of Student Leadership applications for 2026–2027. We look forward to reading the applications and meeting many of our young people who are eager to contribute to the shaping of our academy—helping to give students a real voice and drive real change.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support on our shared journey of excellence.

We look forward to seeing all our students when the Academy reopens on Monday 13 April.



Rewards

Pupils continue to track their success through their Personal Record of Achievement (PRA), which gives pupils a weekly opportunity to reflect on their achievements and set clear targets for the week ahead.

As it stands, we are very proud of our pupils:

548 pupils have now reached their **Bronze** Certificate for 500+ points

526 pupils have now reached their **Silver** Certificate for 750+ points

497 pupils have now reached their **Gold** Certificate for 1000+ points

377 pupils have now reached their **Platinum** Certificate for 1500+ points

6 pupils have now reached their **DOUBLE Platinum** Certificate for 3000+ points

In the final week of this term, pupil's achievements has been celebrated in Year Group Success Assemblies, where pupils collected these certificates. The following rewards were also announced:

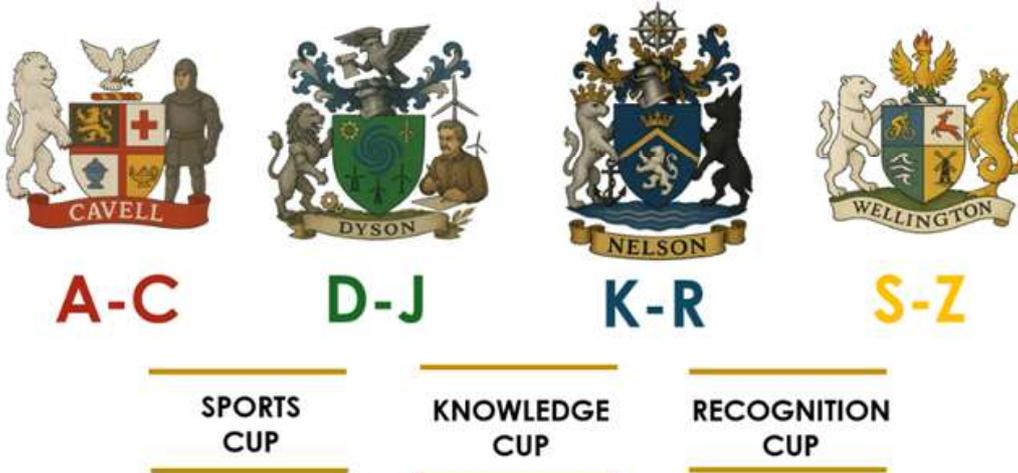
- Subject Awards – voted for by subject departments to recognise excellence
- Work Hard, Aim High, Be Kind Awards – voted for by Year Teams to celebrate pupils who consistently demonstrate our school values
- Personal and Form Attendance Awards – recognising strong attendance
- Form Positive Points Award – awarded to the form with the highest number of positive points

Well done to all our pupils for their fantastic achievements.



House System

We started in Norfolk and left our mark on the World.



The new House system continues the healthy competition and excitement amongst pupils. As shared in our last Newsletter, the current Cup holders are:

Enrichment: Rewards, Houses, Student Leadership

KNOWLEDGE CUP

CURRENT HOLDERS (4):



CAVELL

RECOGNITION CUP

TERM 2 HOLDERS:



NELSON

SPORTS CUP

CURRENT HOLDERS (1):



WELLINGTON



The Knowledge Cup: Competition 4 won by Cavell on Wednesday.

The Recognition Cup: as revealed in Success Assemblies: Nelson.

The Sports Cup: Games competition in week 2 of 3 in PE lessons, latest scores on the stage!

The Knowledge Cup: the fourth instalment of this pupil favourite took place on the final Wednesday of term, with **CAVELL** winning their first competition with 270 points. Particularly praise goes to all the stage contestants, on this occasion from Year 7, 8, 9 and 11. As well as the Cup, **CAVELL** have won a House non-uniform day on Friday 17th April.



The Recognition Cup: the count of positive and negative points restarted from zero at the start of term, with the winners revealed this week. Congratulations to **NELSON** who take the cup from Dyson. A positive points difference of 91,243 was exceptional. As well as the Cup, Nelson House members will receive a bonus end of year raffle ticket for our Amazon Vouchers draw on the final day of the Academic Year.

The Sports Cup: As we write this piece, we are in week two of three of the second instalment of the Sports Cup. In PE lessons, pupils are representing their House in a variety of games-based tournaments, collecting House points based on where they finish in that particular lesson. Sports include Basketball, Netball, Cricket, Dodgeball, Handball, Table Tennis amongst others. At the time of writing this, all four House had passed 300 points, with only 30 points separating first to fourth. Pupils who win within lesson receive 10 personal positive points. The overall winning house will see every member receive a further 30 personal positive points, as well as getting their hands on the Cup!

Student Leadership: Student Leadership has been working hard to make the school better, starting with problems identified by the student body.



Since our last newsletter piece, student leadership are actioning the following identified improvements:

- Canteen food options: meeting the kitchen manager.
- Providing further outdoor seating: hopefully a summer bingo fundraiser to take place.
- Extending extra-curricular clubs: a whole timetable is now displayed in every form, every day, updating each half term.
- Supporting litter on site: hopeful launch of a volunteer group and/or form group rotation.
- Greater audience involvement in the Knowledge Cup: extra audience only rounds introduced based on Countdown's 'Conundrum'.



Student Fundraising

Iceni Academy Student Leadership Team:

The Events and Charity group hosted a food bank drive in which students and staff donated 245 items to Harvest Centre Church foodbank in Brandon as part of an inter-house competition.

Students chose the food bank and, over two weeks, worked together to collect food, toiletries, and essentials for donation. Well done to Dyson House, who won the competition!

All the staff at Iceni Academy are extremely proud of the students. Thank you to all parents, students and staff who donated.



Year Team Updates

Year 7

Year 7: A Term of Growth and New Horizons

It has been a truly fantastic term for Year 7, and as we head into these final months, it is wonderful to see how much everyone has grown. From settling into new routines to taking on exciting challenges, our students continue to impress us every day with their resilience and enthusiasm.

National Young Writer's Competition 2026

We have had great success this term with our young writers entering the competition and being published in a book for their short stories/poetry. What a fantastic achievement for all and thank you to their English teacher for creating such a fantastic opportunity.

Our Year 7 "Tree of Positivity"

Have you noticed the new addition to our Year 7 noticeboard? We have "planted" an empty tree, and it's up to you to help it grow! We are inviting all students to leave positive "leaves" on the branches.

These leaves are a space to celebrate each other and our core values:

- Work Hard: Recognising someone who hasn't given up on a tricky task.
- Aim High: Celebrating a personal best or a bold new goal.
- Be Kind: Giving a shout-out to someone who made your day a little brighter.

Let's see how quickly we can fill our tree with excellent, kind, and ambitious messages!

Attendance: Aiming for 100%

Excellent attendance remains a top priority, and we are incredibly proud of the many students who have maintained a 100% record so far this year. Being in school every day is the best way to ensure you don't miss out on any of the adventures Year 7 has to offer. Keep up the brilliant effort—every day counts!

Looking Ahead: From Year 7 to Year 8

It feels like only yesterday that we were welcoming you all in your sparkling new uniforms. While we still have plenty of exciting things to achieve in Year 7, we are already starting to look forward to the "Year 8 Adventure." Year 8 will bring new subjects, bigger responsibilities, and even more opportunities to lead. For now, let's make the most of every minute of Year 7, work hard, and finish the year on a high!



Year 8

It has been a pleasure working with the Year 8s this half-term in which I have managed to meet and get to know a large number of parents and students.

The big push that we have focused on, as a year group over the past five weeks, has been ensuring each student is equipped with key skills to build them individually as young adults.

My assembly focuses have been on ambition, kindness, and growth and fixed mindsets. I have stressed upon Year 8 that school is a place of learning, but that this comes in many forms, including educationally, socially and personally, so each day needs to be taken with vigour and determination. I have discussed building resilience, giving my own personal experience of when I travelled to India at the age of 17, and that by persevering through challenging moments at both home and school, this further develops them as individuals.

Throughout assemblies, I have also been pleased to have handed out weekly VIP passes to a range of students who have risen to the challenge of achieving the highest positive points throughout the week, with all six Year 8 students topping the positive point chart across the whole school last week.

It was a huge pleasure to host their Success Assembly today in which I was able to hand out a huge number of personal achievements, including 83(!) Platinum certificates for students who have achieved 1500+ positive points this year.

Again, attendance is a big drive, and handing out 100% attendance certificates to 36 members of the Year group is huge personal achievement, and one they should be proud of.

I recognise that the past term has been challenging for Year 8, due to a number of challenges, but I am proud to have seen a real shift in their mentality around school, to one another, and to themselves since February half-term.

Their challenge now is to keep this up through the Summer Term.

Mr Cooper



Year 9

It has been a busy half term for Year 9 as they strive towards the three targets I set for them, with the main focus being to show kindness, one of our core school values.

Year 9 students have been challenged to carry out small acts of kindness each day – from holding doors open, to checking in on someone who might seem upset. It has been wonderful to see the positive shift this has created and to witness the genuine kindness shown by so many of our students.

We also ended the term with our celebration assembly – a fantastic opportunity to recognise the amazing achievements of our young people, from subject awards to 100% attendance and recognition points.

I would like to give a special mention to the following students:

Aim High Award – Theo

Theo always gives 100% effort, 100% of the time. He has achieved the highest number of recognition points in the year group and consistently sets the standard for others.

Work Hard Award – Harvey

Harvey is a hardworking, conscientious young person who gives his all in every lesson. He is always striving to improve and demonstrates outstanding dedication.

Be Kind Award – Sophie

Sophie is always smiling, supporting others, and showing acts of kindness every single day. She embodies what it means to be a kind and thoughtful member of our school community.

A huge well done as well to **9KP** for achieving the best attendance in the year group, and to **9ET** for securing the highest number of recognition points.

I wish you all a restful Easter break and look forward to a positive and productive summer term together.

Mr Morris



Year 10

It has been a pleasure working closely with Year 10 over the last term as Acting Head of Year. It has been wonderful building positive relationships with both students, parents and form tutors. Students have really embraced the work we have been doing on punctuality to lessons and uniform standards, and this will continue to be our focus after the Easter break.

Yesterday's Easter Success Assembly was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our students and recognise their hard work across the academy. Students received certificates for positive points, 100% attendance and subject awards.

Well done to all students who received recognition for their efforts.

Form group awards were also presented, with 10CW achieving the best attendance and 10HR earning the highest number of positive points. Congratulations to both form groups. We also celebrated the Aim High, Work Hard and Be Kind awards.

- **Aim High Award:** Tanya Y
- **Work Hard Award:** Oliver O
- **Be Kind Award:** Alfie P

A huge congratulations to all three students for demonstrating our core values so consistently.

Over the past few assemblies, we have been focusing on Ambition—what it means, and the difference between dreams and goals. We have linked this to how students can be successful in school, as well as their aspirations for the upcoming Work Experience Week in July. We are delighted that 44 students have already secured placements, which is a fantastic achievement for this point in the year. Please continue exploring possible placements, and do get in touch if you have any questions or need support.

I wish you and all our Year 10 students a wonderful Easter and hope you enjoy a restful, well-deserved break.

Miss Bartrum
Acting Head of Year 10



Year 11

I would like to say how proud I am of the Year 11 students this term. Even though it has been a shorter one, they have worked hard and they have kept a really positive attitude. They have been putting the effort in on Seneca which is fantastic and shows their dedication to their learning.

It has been great to see so many of them really pushing themselves in class and staying committed as we get closer to the exams.

Well done, Year 11 – keep going, you are doing yourselves proud.

I am also really proud to say that the Year 11 students have finished the term as the year group with the second lowest negatives. This really does make a difference to their learning, and it shows how many of them are making the right choices every day. Well done to every single student who is working hard in lessons, and a big thank you to parents and carers for your ongoing support – it really does help.

I would like to say well done to those students who have achieved the most positive points up so far, their attitude, effort and consistent positive choices really stand out. Congratulations must go to our top ten students for positive points this term, they are:

Jack A. with **3147** positive points
Dylan W. with **2910** positive points
Angel F. with **2850** positive points
Max K. with **2707** positive points
Scarlett P. with **2624** positive points
Henry P-B. with **2595** positive points
Freddy H. with **2375** positive points
Aimee R. with **2315** positive points
Tyler R. with **2310** positive points
Chloe P. with **2265** positive points

Across the year group 4,018 positive events have been logged so far this term which adds up to an incredible 46820 positive points. This is a fantastic achievement, especially considering how short this term has been.

It was also wonderful to celebrate these achievements in our Year 11 assembly this week. Handing out so many bronze, silver, gold, platinum certificates – and even our very first double platinum certificate, awarded to Jack A – was a real highlight. The students were genuinely excited, watching the presentation closely to see if their name would appear. The atmosphere in the hall showed just how much these achievements mean to them.



Across the year group, 4,018 positive events have been logged so far this term which adds up to an incredible 46,820 positive points. This is a fantastic achievement, especially considering how short this term has been.

It was also wonderful to celebrate these achievements in our Year 11 assembly this week. Handing out so many bronze, silver, gold, platinum certificates – and even our very first double platinum certificate, awarded to Jack A – was a real highlight. The students were genuinely excited, watching the presentation closely to see if their name would appear. The atmosphere in the hall showed just how much these achievements mean to them.

I would also like to say a big thank you to all parents and carers for your continued support with Year 11 – it really does make a difference.

Last week, Year 11 started their GCSE practicals, starting with Food and Nutrition, and they handled it brilliantly. When we are back next term, some students will have their Art exam, their 3D Design exam and their French Speaking exam in the first couple of weeks, so it is an important start to the term for many of them.

Just a reminder that the main GCSE exams begin on Friday 8th May 2026 and the last exam for our school will be on Monday 15th June 2026.

I also want to mention our Pizza and Quiz evening from last week. I was genuinely amazed by how many Year 11 students turned up – it was fantastic to see. They had a great time answering questions from English, Maths, Science, History and Geography, and the pizza was so popular that nothing was left by the end of the evening.

What really stood out, though, was the kindness shown by three students who made a plate of their own pizza for another student because he did not get the pizza he wanted. Their kindness, thoughtfulness and big-hearted attitude were amazing to see and made the evening even more special.

There will be one final Year 11 assembly and we will share the date with you as soon as it is confirmed. I am also really pleased to let you know that the students have voted for a Casino Royale theme for their prom, and we are all really looking forward to Thursday 9th July.

All that is left for me to say is thank you again for your help and support throughout this year and I hope you all have a well-earned rest and a lovely Easter break. I am looking forward to welcoming all the Year 11 students back on Monday 13th April.



Year 11 Easter Bingo Fundraiser

We also held our Easter Bingo fundraiser for the Year 11 prom, and it was a huge success and full of fun. We would like to thank everyone who came along to support the event; it was so lovely to see so many members of the local community having a great time. A big thank you also goes to the staff who gave their time to help support the fundraiser.

We are delighted to announce that a fantastic £2070 was raised towards the Year 11 prom.

Finally, I would like to say well done to the girls from the Prom Committee, who did a fantastic job and worked incredibly hard to ensure the event ran smoothly. Thank you to Macie W. for being a great bingo and raffle caller, Alice W., Lexie C., Elodi-May M., Tilly B. for being great bingo runners. It was a lovely evening and I am very grateful.

Miss F. Agoudjil - Head of Year 11



PE

Spring has finally sprung! At one point, I expected to see Noah float into our field on his ark after the amount of rain we've had! Countless indoor lessons later, and it seems that the weather has finally begun to turn!

This half term, pupils have undertaken a variety of activities since February, including rugby, football, handball, basketball, badminton, table tennis, step aerobics, fitness and dodgeball. When the weather allowed, we have seen some excellent performances across these activities. Pupils have worked hard in developing their skills and it has been great to see how many pupils have been able to transfer several skills across different sports to aid their performance. Well done, all!

Our Year 10 Cambridge National pupils continue to work hard across their leadership and sports media units. Much of this work is now complete, with pupils now completing their drill work in lessons and beginning preparations to lead coaching sessions in Year 11. Our Year 11s have been busy completing their final pieces of coursework across their sports media unit whilst continuing to study for their exam. They have the honour of kicking the summer exam season off during the first week of May with their Sports Studies exam. Once complete, I know that they are looking forward to some well deserved practical time in the sun! Keep up the great work Year 10 and 11.

This half term has seen our second Sports Cup get underway. Following on from the cross-country event earlier in the year, pupils get the opportunity to compete in several team games alongside their house mates, against other houses. Each lesson, pupils can select one of the lesson options below to be involved in, with 10, 8, 6 and 4 points being awarded to house teams in each activity. The two scores are added together at the end of the lesson and these are added to the overall house total board. Once again, pupils have entered into the competition showing superb levels of enthusiasm and competitiveness. It has now become a habit of pupils to check the board whilst in the hall for break and lunch times in order to see how their house is getting on, and we absolutely love this! It has been a real joy to be a part of these lessons and as I write this article, just seven points separate the three top teams. I suppose this is a good time to address the ever increasing, overly large, ginormous, huge elephant in the room. Yes, the only house not to win a single competition so far, is indeed my very own, Cavell. But I am optimistic! I cannot help but think that this is our time. I am bored of Mr Taylor telling the world how good Wellington are (they are!) and the 'I told you so' looks from Mrs Isbell when Dyson, quietly go about their business and snatch victory from nowhere (they do!). Mr Morris (our honorary PE teacher of the department) has even got to celebrate victory with the ever-solid Nelsonians! Come on Cavell, our time really is now!



We look forward to working alongside the pupils during the Sports Cup across the last week of term and the first week back after Easter. Good luck to everyone, may luck be on your side! We hope that you enjoy your remaining Sports Cup lessons!

| Lesson | Game 1 | Game 2 |
|--------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Basketball | Table Tennis |
| 2 | Dodgeball | Badminton |
| 3 | Netball | Cricket (Indoor) |
| 4 | Handball | Indoor Tennis |
| 5 | Capture the Flag | |
| 6 | Tag Rugby | Volleyball |
| 7 | Endball | Rounders (indoor) |
| 8 | <i>Pupil Choice</i> | <i>Pupil Choice</i> |
| 9 | <i>Pupil Choice</i> | <i>Pupil Choice</i> |

Recently, some of our pupils travelled to Thetford Academy to compete in the South Norfolk Panathlon event. This event consists of several different sports combined into a large event. I am proud to report that our senior team emerged from the competition achieving second place! Well done to those involved, what an achievement! Thank you to Mrs Griggs who coordinated teams and transported the children to the event.

Our Spring clubs continue into next half term. All clubs are free and do not require pupils to sign up, they simply need to meet in the changing rooms ready for their chosen session. Please see the academy clubs guide for details.



Our affiliation with fellow ATT academy, The Nicholas Hamond Academy (TNHA), Swaffham, continues to provide an excellent opportunity for our pupils to be involved in extra-curricular sport. This half term, saw TNHA pupils travel to Icen for fixtures in rugby and girls football. There were many, well contested fixtures across KS3 matches. Well done to all involved! Next term will see TNHA once again travel to us for fixtures in rounders, tennis and cricket. Pupils will be given details of these during the first week back after Easter.

Hopefully, we can start to need less layers for lessons as the sunshine makes an appearance, although please keep these on standby to cater for the cooler days. Please remember that Icen branded PE items, or non-branded plain navy alternative are appropriate for lessons. Socks should be Icen PE socks or white sports socks only.



As the weather turns warmer, pupils are encouraged to bring extra drinks, sunscreen and a plain baseball cap to use in lessons. Thank you for helping to support pupils to come well equipped for PE lessons, we really do appreciate the logistics that go into this.

A gentle reminder that all jewellery, including retainers, must be removed for lessons. This includes new piercings. We cannot allow piercings to be taped up in lessons under AfPE guidelines and therefore pupils will be expected to remove them. Please encourage pupils to wait until July 2026 for new piercings. Thank you for your support with this.

Enjoy the Easter break. I hope you find time to enjoy everything that spring brings with it. Even on the shortest of walks or the briefest chance to enjoy some fresh air, you never have to look far to spot a little pocket of colour hiding in the garden, forest or hedgerow. Look for a new pocket each day: they are waiting to bring a smile.

Wishing you a break full of colourful pockets and the odd chocolate egg. Enjoy!

Rebecca Bradley
Specialist Leader of PE.

Science

At our recent Student Voice meeting, pupils shared that the current Science lab stools aren't the comfiest. We love hearing ideas that make our learning spaces better, so we've jumped straight into action. Lab 1 is now trialling a brand-new chair design with a supportive backrest – and we've included a photo so you can check out the upgrade.



After the Easter break, our Gardening Club will be running again. Please keep an eye out for posters in the department with details about when sessions will begin.

Miss Williams



English

We are delighted to share some amazing news about our Year 7 creative writers! Working alongside Ms Horn-Castle, several students have recently entered the 'Young Writers' competition, winning places in published copies of 'I have a Dream' and 'Grim Tales', 'Fright Club' and 'Empowered'. This is a superb accolade, highlighting the talent here at Iceni.

Humanities

In humanities this half term, students have engaged thoughtfully with some challenging topics. In history, Year 8 have explored the development of the British Empire and confronted its controversial legacy, whilst Year 9s have been debating whether the firebombing of Dresden and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were justified. In Religious Studies, Year 7 and 8 have been finding out about the key beliefs of Christianity and Judaism respectively and broadening their understanding of Abrahamic faith. In Geography Year 7 have been learning about the history of the earth itself and how it formed, whereas Year 9 developed an appreciation of what constitutes an economy at both a national and global level. Outside of lesson, both the politics and debate clubs have gone from strength to strength with students really taking advantage of the forum to discuss and debate contentious issues.

Mr Haymes & Mr Dyer- Jones

Maths

A huge well done to Henry PB and Emilia L for progressing to the Kangaroo Round of the UKMT Intermediate Challenge. Both students put in a great deal of effort on the follow-up paper, and we're keeping our fingers crossed for their continued success!

The Maths Department has also launched its rewards trips to Legoland and Thorpe Park. An impressive number of students have been working diligently at home on Sparx and Seneca to earn a place on this trip. We look forward to celebrating and rewarding their hard work this summer. Congratulations to everyone who has shown such commitment in securing their place!

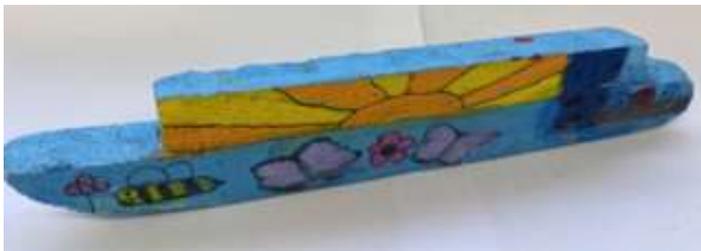
Miss Saunders



Design Technology

Year 7

Year 7 have been coming to the end of their designer boat project with the last few lessons focused on practical making and accurately painting on their designs. Once completed they will be moving on to making a wooden version exploring skills in sawing, chiselling, drilling and making wooden joints.



Year 8

Year 8 have finished their metalwork dog tags this half term with most students taking home an amazing metalwork keyring. Within the practical they explored cutting and filing metal to shape it, how to polish it and make it shine and techniques to engrave details onto. Next they will be moving onto a textile project called creative creatures.



Year 9

Year 9 are coming to the end of their acrylic phone stand project. Within their practical they have been exploring the difference between acrylic and vinyl decoration, line bending, cutting and shaping the plastic and constructing a 3D product. Next they will be moving onto a mini GCSE Clock project.

Year 10

Year 10 are coming to the end of their first GCSE project with the brief of designing a birdbox inspired by architecture. The majority of students have worked hard to complete their work on time and have made some incredible final pieces. They will all be moving onto the new project with the brief of Habitat after the easter break.



ART & DESIGN

Art created by...



Eleanor YR7



YR7



Betsy F YR9



Jacob B YRS



Hope YR9



Hope YR9



Safia B YR9



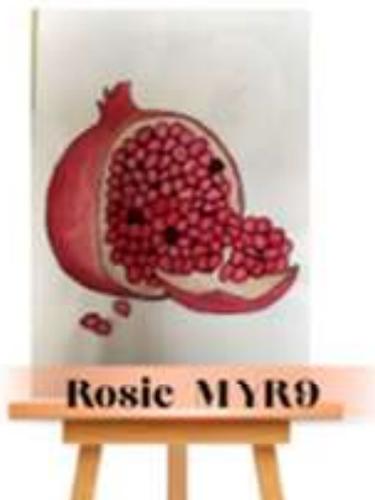
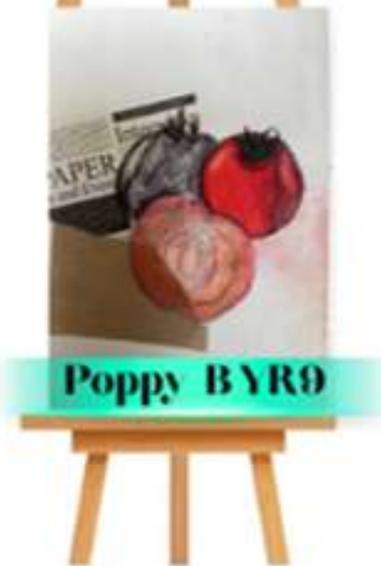
YR9

KS3 have started their new projects. Year 7 have been exploring the fundamental tonal drawing skills and mark making, and are now transferring their skills onto clay in the Fish project. Year 8 are exploring Mechanical forms through experimental drawing, collage, collagraph printing and are now moving forward to explore press printing techniques. Year 9 are exploring food and packaging they have started with observational tonal drawings, looking at the artist May Van Milligen, exploring watercolour and mark making. They have explored the concept of cropping through oil pastels, moving onto explore the work of Andy Warhol.



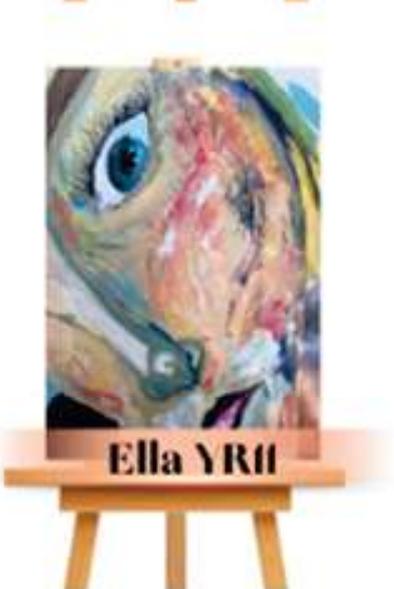
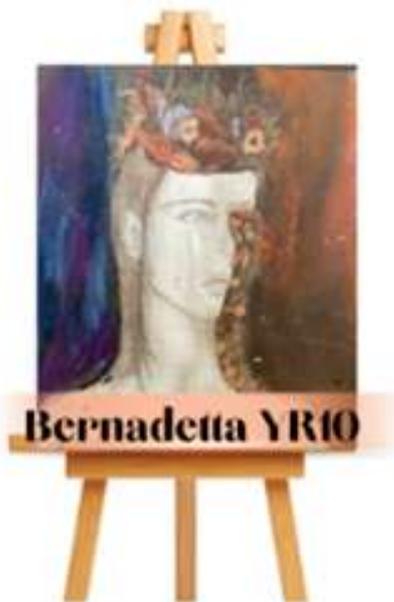
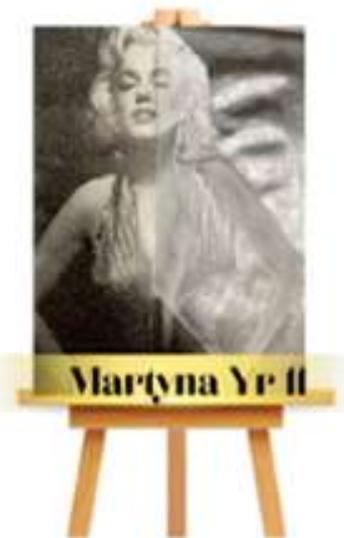
ART & DESIGN

Art created by...



ART & DESIGN

Art created by...



KS4 have been working hard developing their ideas on their chosen themes. Year 10 are exploring a project titled 'wrapped, tied and bound'. They have explored a variety of artists throughout their project and are now exploring different media to create developments, ready to design their final pieces. Year 11 are working hard on their final project.





Year 7

This half term's focus for Year 7 food is all about protein. Within their theory lessons, they have been learning where protein comes from, what our body needs protein for, and the science behind it. Their linked practical lesson covered making home made breaded chicken or halloumi strips, exploring techniques such as cutting, pane and baking. They will now be moving onto learning about Carbohydrates.



Year 8

This half terms focus for Year 8 food has all been about caught foods. Within their theory lessons they have been learning about what caught foods mean and the types of food within it, what is bottom trawling and how it differs from sustainable fishing techniques, and the impact that caught foods have on the environment. In their linked practical they were making tuna/cheese fishcakes, and exploring techniques such as cutting, pane and baking. They will now be moving onto learning about food miles.



Year 9

This half terms focus for Year 9 food is all about meal planning. Within their theory lessons they have been learning about what portion sizes look like and the importance of using them, different what medical conditions that affect dietary choices are and what they may need to consider in the foods they choose, and what ethical choices are also linked to foods. In their linked practical they made a lactose free banana bread.

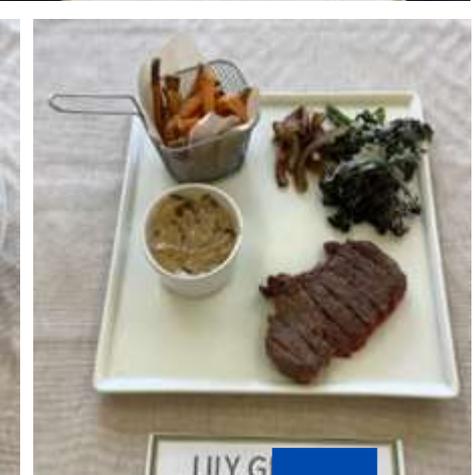


Year 10

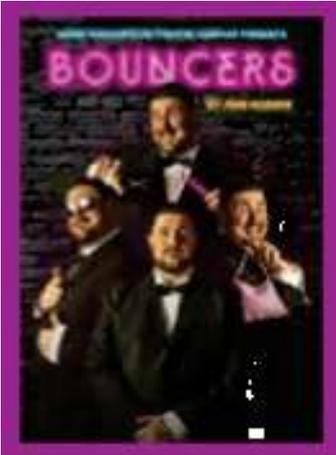
This half term's focus for Year 10 food has been a practice NEA2 coursework unit where the students had to plan, research and make a two-course menu to promote five different fruits and vegetables. They had to make their dishes from scratch and think about their plate presentation. Photos of some of the dishes are shown below.

Year 11

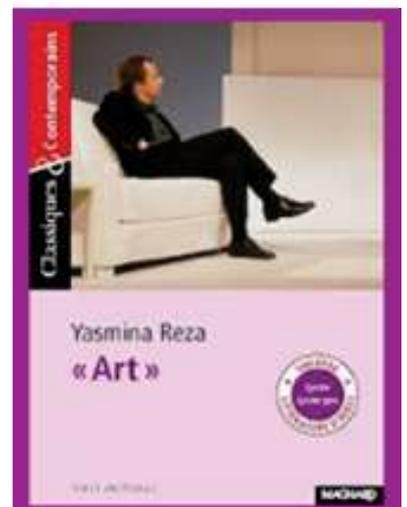
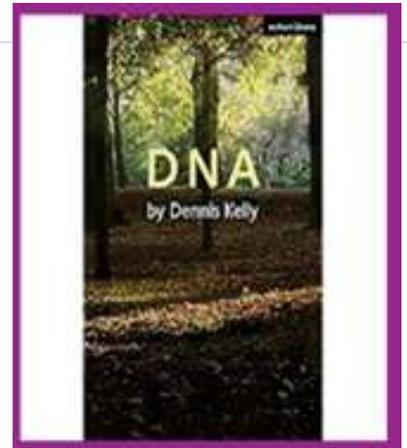
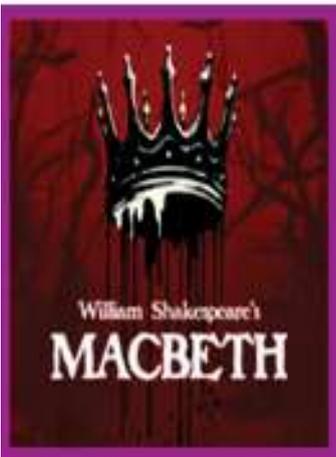
This half term's focus for Year 11 have been focusing on actually completing their NEA2 component coursework and in this final week have been working really hard in their final practical exams making their three-course meals. The smells coming from that room have been incredible and all the students have done themselves proud in their conduct. Well done.



Destination: DRAMA



Year 11 students have been working hard both within the lessons and at home to prepare for their scripted live performance assessment within the last week of term. They have been learning lines, choreographing staging, designing props and conducting extensive rehearsals. We are very proud and cannot wait to see them shine at their private rehearsals. Once completed their focus will be exam preparation for the written paper.



Safeguarding



Parent and Carer Online Safety Update

Secondary February 2026

As our children grow into confident young digital citizens, it's completely natural for parents and carers to feel unsure about how best to support them online. The digital world changes quickly, but you don't need to be an expert to make a real difference. This newsletter brings together practical, non-judgemental guidance to help you support your teen's wellbeing, balance screen use, and build resilience in an increasingly digital world. Our aim is to empower you with clear, calm information that helps your family feel confident and connected.



Helping Children and Teens Navigate AI Safely and Confidently

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a normal part of teens' daily lives — from homework tools to creative apps that generate images, videos and music. While AI can support learning and encourage creativity, it's important for young people to understand how to use it thoughtfully.

AI tools can sometimes produce incorrect or misleading information, because they generate answers based on pattern rather than verified facts. They can also create images or videos that appear real but aren't, which may confuse teens or contribute to misinformation. Some AI models may unintentionally reflect biases, exposing young people to stereotypes or unfair assumptions.

Supporting digital resilience doesn't mean limiting curiosity — it's about empowering your child to navigate AI safely:

- Encourage them to check facts using trusted sources.
- Remind them that not everyone online is who they appear to be, and AI can imitate real people.
- Keep communication open so they feel able to discuss anything confusing or concerning.
- Help them understand that AI should support, not replace, their own judgement.

If you'd like to explore this topic further:

- Childnet – AI & Online Safety: <https://www.childnet.com>
- Internet Matters – AI Guidance for Parents: <https://www.internetmatters.org>
- NSPCC – Keeping Children Safe Online: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

These resources offer practical advice to help your teen grow into a confident, critical and safe digital citizen.

AI Chatbots – What Parents and Carers Need to Know

AI chatbots are becoming a normal part of many teenagers' online lives — helping with homework, answering quick questions, or offering a space to explore ideas. While they can be useful, it's important for young people to understand their limits. AI chatbots can sometimes give incorrect or misleading answers, and some teens may be tempted to treat them like real friends or sources of emotional support, which can impact healthy relationships. Chatbots may also present information that isn't always age-appropriate or fact-checked. You can support your teen by encouraging open conversations, checking information together, and reminding them that AI can assist but it can't replace real-life support.

This AI guide for parents & carers provides more detailed information:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2025/artificial-intelligence-safety-tips-for-parents/>

Safeguarding

Building Your Child's Digital Resilience

Many parents and carers tell us that the digital world feels overwhelming at times — fast-moving apps, constant updates, new AI tools, and online trends that seem to appear overnight.

It's completely normal to feel unsure about how to guide your child when technology changes so quickly. The good news is that you don't need to know everything about every platform to make a real difference. What matters most is helping your teen develop the confidence and skills to navigate the online world safely and thoughtfully.

Digital resilience grows gradually. It begins when young people feel able to talk openly about what they're seeing online — whether that's something exciting, confusing, or upsetting. Taking a calm, curious approach ("Tell me more about that") helps your child practice identifying what feels positive and what feels unhelpful.

You can also support resilience by exploring how online platforms work together. Teens benefit from understanding that algorithms shape what appears on their feeds, that not everything online is accurate, and that it's okay to step back when something feels overwhelming. Encouraging simple habits — such as pausing before responding, checking information from trusted sources, or taking a break when emotions feel heightened — helps them build the judgement they'll use throughout their digital lives.

Above all, remind your child that they're not alone. Keeping communication open and supportive reassures them that whatever they encounter online, you're there to help them navigate it with confidence.

For further questions and guidance, reach out to the Safeguarding Team at your child's academy who can offer advice and signpost further support if needed.

Understanding Screen Time Guidance



The World Health Organization (WHO) offers guidance to help families find a healthy balance, but these are not strict rules — they are flexible recommendations to support wellbeing, not to police parents and carers decisions:

- Under 1 year - screen time is not recommended
- Under 2 years: No more than 1 hour per day, when engaging with reading, activities or chatting with a family member.
- Ages 2–5: No more than 1 hour per day of high-quality content, ideally watched together with an adult.
- Ages 6–17: WHO does not set a strict hourly limit but advises consistent boundaries so screen use does not interfere with sleep, physical activity, learning or social interaction.

A helpful routine is a "tech-off" wind-down hour before bedtime to support healthy sleep.

If you need advice and support around any aspect of your child's well being you can get in touch with the Pastoral team at your academy.

BOOSTING DIGITAL WELLBEING & MENTAL HEALTH

For many children and teens, being online is an important part of social life, learning, and relaxation. When balanced well, digital spaces can boost creativity and connection.

However, research shows that higher non-school screen use in teenagers is linked with increased anxiety, lower mood, and disrupted sleep routines. Evening screen exposure can interfere with sleep quality by disrupting melatonin release.

This doesn't mean screens are harmful in themselves — it simply reinforces the value of helping young people build healthy habits and awareness of how online activities make them feel.

Parents and carers can support their child's digital wellbeing by:

- Encouraging breaks during long periods of screen use
- Helping them notice which online activities lift or drain their mood
- Supporting device-free wind-down time before bed
- Making space for offline hobbies, movement, and rest
- Keeping open conversations about emotions linked to online life

Prefer to watch than read?

This two minute UNICEF video provides 3 powerful tips to help you manage your child's screen time:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QlujG-rYQvQ&t=118s>

The following websites all contain useful sources of information for parents and carers. Click the image to access.





aim

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