



At the Centre

The Centre School
End of Autumn Term Newsletter

December 2025

Principal's Message

This is a marvellous newsletter, reflecting the wide range of opportunities available to students at The Centre School. The progress that some young people have made is fantastic. For many it's not easy coming from completely different provisions into The Centre School, which is busy, bustling and very full. As ever, the tremendous support and help we have received from parents and carers has been crucial in ensuring success for students.

We now have a short (and much needed) break before the start of the Spring Term. I hope that you all have a great Christmas and we look forward to seeing you at the Home Visits on the 6 January.

Sue Raven



Did you know? Last month, Sue visited Buckingham Palace to collect her MBE from King Charles! Sue said that, alongside her award, the work of the school was recognised by the King.



Christmas Special

Part One: Christmas Dinner!

By Tiff

On Wednesday 17 December, we celebrated Christmas with a magnificent, traditional festive dinner! Huge thanks to Tiff and her team of (student) cooks and servers for a wonderful occasion. Special mention to Adam (in Year 12) for all that he contributed towards this great success.





Part Two: Christmas Science!

It's time for Santa to 'go green'! With all the miles he covers on Christmas Eve, he needs to find a better alternative to fossil fuels like petrol and diesel. He just can't get the range with an electric sleigh, so it's time to investigate biofuel (ethanol produced from sugarcane)!

In science lessons, our students have answered Santa's call! They have been designing, building and testing 'biofuel sleighs' (with a view to launch, Christmas Eve 2026). What a sight to behold - fiery sleighs tearing through the air (over 10 metres) seeking their target chimney (a big old bin). We have witnessed some magnificent creations and a whole lot of engineering potential! Special mentions to Kodie and DJ for their graceful 'Jet2' themed effort and to Reme and Ella whose 'winged marvels' wowed onlookers....and what about Lee?! Lee was the only student who landed his sleigh in the chimney at the first time of asking with a design which flew like a dart yet landed 'crash test Santa' safely. More work to be done, but the future of Christmas appears to be in safe hands!



RULES
1. You get two sleigh launches on the Test Track.
2. Sleighs must be on the sleigh - and must not fall off.
3. You must get him in and out of the chimney in 10 seconds.
4. You must get him down in 10 seconds.
5. You must get him down in 10 seconds.
6. You must get him down in 10 seconds.

AT THE FARM



By Dunks & Richenda

It has been a busy and exciting term on the farm, with plenty to celebrate. We were delighted to welcome six lambs, and the students have played an important role in helping to care for them - learning about feeding, health checks, plenty of cuddles, and the responsibility that comes with looking after young animals.

Despite the changeable season, the wet weather has been relatively kind to us, with only a handful of farm duties ending in getting thoroughly soaked! This has allowed sessions to run smoothly and has kept both students and animals in good spirits.

Our ponies have been enjoying some well-earned grooming sessions, especially after their enthusiastic mud-rolls in the field. These moments have been a great opportunity for students to practise calm handling, patience, and animal care routines.

We also welcomed a splash of colour to the farm this term with the arrival of Richenda's new pink wheelbarrow. Students worked together to set it up, developing practical skills, teamwork, and problem-solving - and it's already proving very popular!

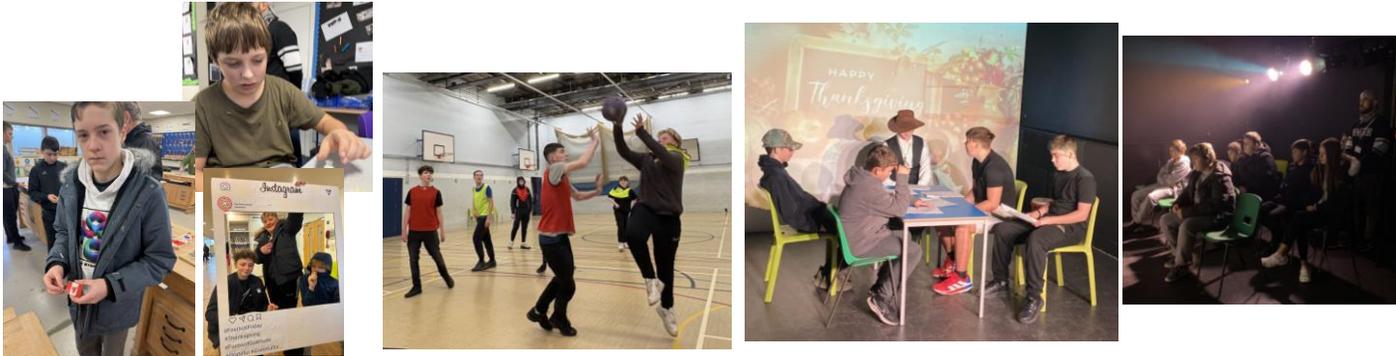
The farm continues to be a valuable space for learning, responsibility, and enjoyment, and we're proud of the care and commitment students show every session.



Festival Friday

By Laura

This term's Festival Friday was all about Thanksgiving. Festival Friday is part of our Religious Education and culture programme, exploring beliefs, rituals and traditions from around the world.



THANKSGIVING



Science went cranberry-mad, DT students crafted American and Canadian flag key-rings, and everyone spent time reflecting on things they're thankful for at home and at school. Drama staged a production, for all to enjoy. In the kitchen, students prepared a traditional Thanksgiving feast, with Tiffany leading the way as they worked hard to make pumpkin pie and all the trimmings that make up a classic Thanksgiving meal. All in all, Festival Friday brought our school community together — raising awareness, celebrating gratitude, and ending the week on an uplifting, united note.



ART

By Laura

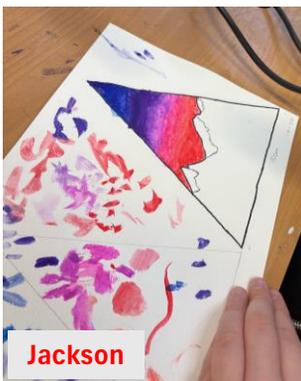
Zach



Year 7 and 8 Art students have been putting in a lot of effort recently, working on monster sculptures — getting hands-on and quite messy in the process. Through this, they've not only picked up important art skills, but also shown real resilience. Art isn't always easy — it can feel exposing and frustrating when things don't go to plan. But these students stuck with it, adapted, problem-solved and tried different approaches until things worked. Watching them grow as artists (and as people) has been fantastic — their creativity, resilience and spirit shine through every piece.



Students across all year groups have been taking inspiration from Jen Arani for their Christmas card designs, producing some beautiful watercolour pieces and detailed line drawings of mountain ranges. They have all impressed me with their dedication, focus, and commitment to producing work to the very best of their ability. A particular mention goes to Bentley, who is new to the art room and has truly hit the ground running, demonstrating enthusiasm, confidence, and a strong work ethic from the outset.



Jackson



Jack BH



Bentley



Ella

ART

By Laura



Reme



Year 9 have taken inspiration from two very different artists: **Jean Arp**, known for his abstract sculptures, and pop artist **Yayoi Kusama**, famous for her love of dots. Students were challenged to incorporate ideas and inspiration from both artists into their final pieces, and the results, as you can see, are spectacular.



Kayden P

Michael

Jack BH

Year 10 and 11 have been taking inspiration from two well-known street artists, **Blek le Rat** and **Banksy**. They have been exploring visual literacy and social commentary, focusing on how images can be read and used to communicate powerful messages to society in the form of placards. All students have impressed me with their creativity and depth of thought. Collectively, they have demonstrated that they are ready to be entered for GCSE Art in September 2026.



Jake C

Jake B

Leo

Kai

Art GCSE students 25–26: Kyla and Eric have been working hard to complete Portfolio 1 of 2 for their Art GCSE qualification. Both have made significant progress since starting the course, and their growth in skills, confidence, and commitment has not gone unnoticed. While I am unable to post images of live GCSE work, both students have produced some truly exceptional pieces.

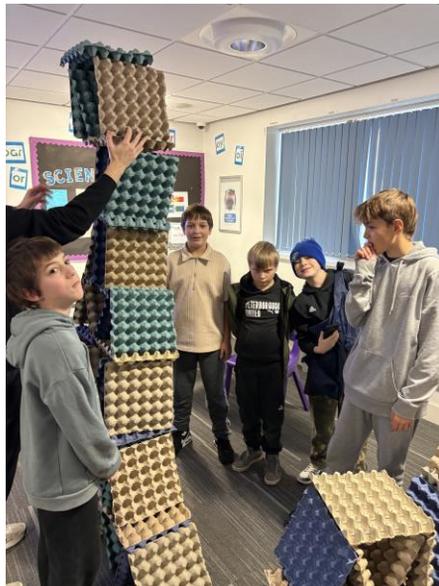
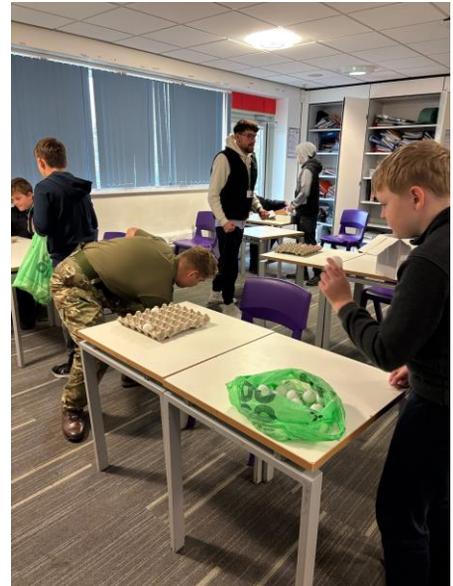


Skills Builder

By Chris C

At The Centre School we are constantly working towards important goals. One of those goals is that all students develop the **eight essential skills** for employability. Year 7 and 8 have started early, with a weekly Skills Builder lesson focussed on learning, practising and applying a particular essential skill. This term our focus has been on **Teamwork** and **Problem Solving**. Students have learned about what makes great teamwork and how to go about tackling tricky problems. They have had fun trying out their new approaches and demonstrating their growing skills across a range of fiendish challenges!

Have a conversation at home about the **Skills Builder** lessons. Ask your young person about the challenges they have attempted. What have they enjoyed and what have they learned?



WORK + CAREERS

By Chris C

It's never too early to start thinking and talking about the future. Not many secondary school students are confident about what they want to do after school, or indeed who they want to be. Conversations at home about what's important, their likes and dislikes and the different types of opportunities available after Year 11, can help to inform, inspire and motivate your young person. To support, here are **a couple of useful resources (see right).**

1. All Centre School students have access to the online Job Explorer Database (JED). You can use JED to find out about a wide range of jobs, including what the job involves, what training you need and what you are likely to earn. To login to JED, follow this link and then enter our Access Code <https://jed.ckcareers.org.uk/Jed/LoginAccessCode.aspx>
Access Code: **95ATXVYB**

2. The National Careers Service website is a brilliant resource to support thinking about work and careers. For example, there are helpful questionnaires (multi-choice) to help you get started, called 'Discover your skills and careers' and 'Skills Health Check'.
<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Activities this term

In early December, staff from Cambridge Regional College visited with students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13. Our students learned more about life at college and the different courses on offer. In addition, they picked up tips on how to complete a college application and were given important information about travel options.



Students who are interested in college applications (for September 2026) are now working with Richard Beckett our Pathways Advisor. It is recommended that college applications are submitted by mid-January.

Our Vocational Programme students have been getting some hands-on experience of the plumbing trade with Stu and Ian.

If you need a new radiator, a leaky tap fixed or a new toilet fitting...call a qualified plumber...but hopefully, in a few years, it will be one of these lads helping you out!



BRENSCOMBE

By Sam



www.brenscombeoutdoor.co.uk/



Students had a fantastic and memorable residential experience in Dorset, embracing every challenge with enthusiasm and resilience. Despite a challenging start to the week due to heavy rain and a fallen tree on the journey down, spirits remained high.



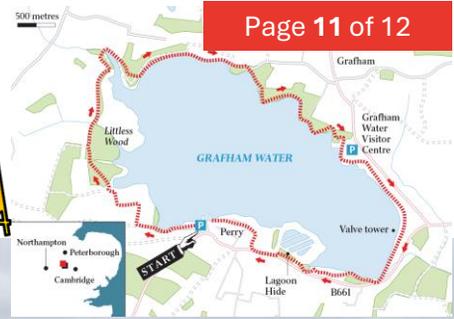
Students took part in a range of exciting activities, including rock climbing and abseiling, crate-stacking challenges, canoeing to Brownsea Island, and speedboat rides in Swanage. Each activity provided opportunities for students to build confidence, communicate effectively, and work together as a team.



Overall, the Dorset residential was a huge success. Students have shown outstanding teamwork, positive attitudes, and the ability to adapt to new challenges - making it a truly rewarding experience for everyone involved.

GRAFHAM

By Stu



Our students made a hugely positive start to their residential at Grafham, demonstrating lots of learning, teamwork, and energy from the off. A stop at a supermarket gave them a chance to practice budgeting and making decisions before arriving and settling into their rooms. Once on site, students worked together to organise their rooms and practice life-skills (like planning and organising food), before going on a challenging bike ride. They showed determination, resilience, and great behaviour. The evening was full of fun team challenges and games, helping students communicate, cooperate, and laugh together.

Students met each day's challenges, helped each other, and became more independent in the process. A superb effort from all involved.





Key CONTACTS

Need/request	Please Contact
To report student absence (or to request support with school attendance)	attendance@astreacentreschool.org or call 01954 288789 ASAP and before 9.40am
For general queries	office@astreacentreschool.org
To contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead	annabel.croxon@astreacentreschool.org
For queries about work experience or careers education	chris.cassidy@astreacentreschool.org
If your child is ready to leave The Centre School at the end of this school year , and you are seeking advice and guidance regarding next steps, to contact the Pathways Advisor , Richard	Richard.Beckett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk



DATES for your Calendar

Date	Event
Mon 5 January	Staff Training Day - school closed to students.
Tue 6 January	Spring Term Home Visits (you will be contacted by one of our team on Mon 5 January to confirm a time that suits).
Wed 7 January	Students return to school to start the Spring Term.
Mon 16 February – Fri 20 February	Half-term break.
Fri 20 March	Staff Training Day - school closed to students.
Fri 27 March	Final day of the Spring Term.
Mon 30 March – Fri 10 April	Easter break.
Mon 13 April	Staff Training Day - school closed to students.
Tue 14 April	Summer Term Home Visits (you will be contacted by one of our team on Mon 13 April to confirm a time that suits).
Wed 15 April	Students return to school to start the Summer Term.