



Belong School Gloucestershire

Autumn recap 2023

From the Headteacher

Welcome to our Autumn 2023 update, which I hope will give you a flavour of what our students have been doing this term.

Since our last update we've had excellent results from our previous year 11s in their GCSE, Functional Skills and Vocational qualifications in August.

It's been great to welcome students back after the summer holidays, alongside new students, including those in Key Stage 3 as our school expands our offer to students from 11 onwards.

We've also been working hard to develop our curriculum offer, building upon our existing partnerships with some exciting new opportunities, including silversmithing and guitarmaking under the guidance of local craftspeople.

For regular updates on what is happening at our school, please see our website www.belonglearning.co.uk and our Facebook page.



Pastoral Updates

Belong School Gloucestershire's Pupil Parliament held their first Pupil Parliament event, a really successful cake sale with funds raised going to MacMillan Cancer Support.

In their role representing student voice within the school, the Pupil Parliament have also been exploring uniform for students and how best we manage phones within our setting.

The Pastoral and Safeguarding teams were in contact with parents and carers earlier this term in their regular safeguarding newsletter. This newsletter provides information regarding current events and issues for parents and carers to be aware of.

This term's newsletter discussed some of the advantages and challenges in using parental control apps to monitor and safeguard mobile phone use among children, as well as highlighting the rise in the number of children using vapes.

Forest School



Art



This term in Forest School we have been preparing and processing firewood to keep warm over the winter months. One student has been working hard on developing an enterprise project to achieve an AQA award. He has been doing market research and preparing Christmas decorations that he has started to make by hand, using green woodwork methods and Forest School principles to make reindeer, snowmen and Christmas tree decorations.

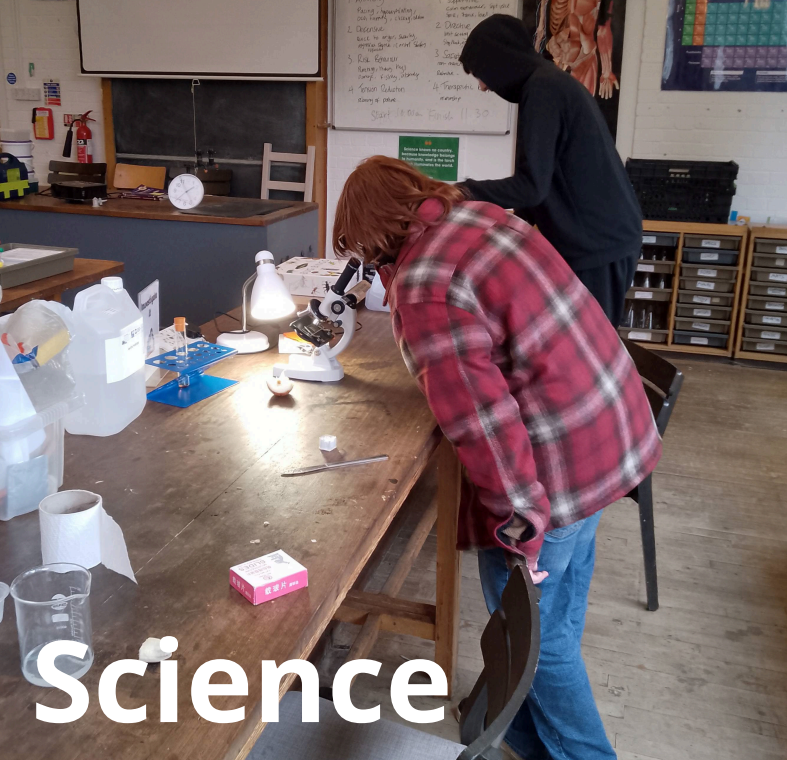
Next term we will be exploring survival techniques used to survive in cold weather conditions and developing the students' specialist project topics, which include animal welfare, the ecosystem of our school site and enterprise using handmade wood products. All this along with our usual social and emotional games and development.



This term our students have been very busy getting stuck into their GCSE projects. They have been working hard to explore their chosen themes and experimenting with ideas in their sketchbooks.

Other students have been working on making some amazing clay tiles to join together to create a whole school mosaic, and Belong Gloucestershire staff have also taken the opportunity to join in to create a giant collaborative piece of work, which you can see on the front page.





Science

There has been lots happening in Science this term. In Biology, year 10 have been exploring plant, animal and bacterial cells. Students have created their own slides to view onion cells and starch grains from bananas under a light microscope. We are now starting to learn about the topic of inheritance. Year 11 students have been learning about key functions in the human body, including respiration and cell mitosis and meiosis.



Pupils have particularly enjoyed investigating some of the more controversial topics relating to these areas, such as debating the use of stem cells and researching the first embryo created without gametes (sex cells).

Our Year 8 students have been working on getting their bunsen burner license by demonstrating that they can use a bunsen burner to heat substances safely during experiments. We've also been looking at testing acids and bases using litmus paper and universal indicator, which we've been applying to other everyday substances to find out which are acidic and which are alkali.

Post-16 Preparation



This academic year, students at Belong Gloucestershire have had a number of opportunities to engage with both local and national employers. In October students took part in a visit to Gloucester Careers Fair where they were able to visit employer stands, meet company representatives and find out information about some of Gloucestershire's main employers. As part of Green Careers Week in November, we were visited by local energy company Ecotricity and Severn Trent Water who spoke to our students about the important work they are doing to help the environment, as well as the variety of post-16 careers and apprenticeship opportunities they offer.



We have some more exciting opportunities in the pipeline for the rest of the academic year including a return visit to engineering company Renishaw following an amazing STEM workshop last year, as well as a visit from the NHS Careers and Apprenticeship team - more information to follow.



Reading

As part of our work to ensure students are able to experience the joy and wonder of reading, Belong School Gloucestershire has introduced a regular reading programme. Each student selects a book of their choice based upon their interests and reading age. They are encouraged to read every day wherever possible and are made aware of the benefits of reading regularly in improving their literary knowledge and expanding their vocabulary. The impact has been seen particularly in English lessons with students making more thoughtful word choices and showing a greater sense of style and structure in their written work. The programme will hopefully prove to be a fruitful compliment to not only the English curriculum (particularly the creative writing unit in the Pearson English GCSE 2.0) but also help to raise literacy across the whole school and instil a love of reading that our learners can take forward with them in life.



PE and Sport

Our three students in Year 11 have been studying the WJEC GCSE PE short course and they have made a great start to the year. So far they have been studying anatomy including the muscles and bones as well as the respiratory and circulatory systems. They have recently completed their Year 11 mocks and appear to be on course to achieve their predicted grades in the final exam which they sit in May/June 2024.

In key stage three and four core PE lessons we began the year looking at traditional team sports such as Football and have recently begun teaching Basketball.

As a department we have been investing our budget into buying new PE equipment and have recently purchased new Footballs, Basketballs and Badminton equipment. We are also aiming to introduce Swimming onto the PE curriculum after February half term - please keep an eye out as we hope to update soon. In October we visited Gloucester City Football Club where students were given a tour of the Football pitch, changing room and facilities. The Football Club staff were so impressed by the conduct and attitudes of our students that they were given two free tickets to a league game of their choice. We are looking to arrange more trips to professional sporting clubs within the county and surrounding areas such as Gloucester Rugby Club and Forest Green Football Club.



Recent Events

This term, students visited Gloucester museum, which houses some incredible artefacts.

The Museum of Gloucester tells the story of Gloucester's origins as a Roman settlement and its subsequent development through the Dark Ages and Medieval period. Students were able to witness a huge range of articles, from Roman treasures to paintings by famous painters, such as Thomas Gainsborough, John Atkinson Grimshaw

