

Thank you to everyone who has made this term possible. As we come to the end of what has been a very busy period, we can look back with pride at what we have achieved and continue to strive for across our sports and with our young people. Amazingly this term alone nearly 50% of the pupils have represented the school, with 51% in Year 8, Year 10, and Year 12; astounding when we're yet to fully get into the football season or summer activities. Those numbers show the hunger to compete and perform.

One of the highlights this term however has been our initiative to get everyone active, and not just for the school. I have led a Daily Mile walk with my tutor group, and we ran house touch rugby for all abilities in most year groups (weather permitting) at half term, allowing everyone the opportunity to score points for their house. I hope we can do similar for football in the new year as well as run our multi school tournaments to allow as many to represent the school as we can.

Come the New Year we look forward to welcoming former Commonwealth Athlete Mrs Henrietta Paxton who will be joining the staff to help deliver our A level course as well as contribute to games afternoons. We look forward to working with her and seeing the skills, knowledge and understanding she can bring to our athletes with her wealth of experience.

Badminton

We entered the School Sports Magazine National Competition for the first time, both the U14 and U16 sides made the last 16 of the competition, before coming up against extremely stiff opposition. However, it was a great opportunity for our players to pit themselves against some of the nation's best young players.

Our U16 side also went unbeaten in our local competition, and we hope there will be a county round to follow. Thanks as always to Simon Woodhouse and the work he puts in with our players.

Basketball

Mr Duckett hosted the local Y10 tournament again this year, with several schools taking part. Our Y9 team just edging their older opponents. This is no real surprise as they have already topped their National Cup Group, and they will now progress to the next round. Our other teams hope to progress in the new year, along with our Y8 Junior NBA side.

Cricket

Although no cricket this term, we look forward to the indoor season in the new year under Mr Morton's tenure, followed by nets after half term to build towards the various competitions and fixtures we have lined up in the summer.

Cross Country

After a busy round of local league races, 34 runners were selected to run at the county trials following our success in winning all age groups. Unfortunately, our teams were unable to progress from the regional round of the English Schools Cross Country Cup this year but have no doubt we will bounce back with some real talent coming through and much to look forward to in the New Year.

Football

For the first time we have been able to run a competitive 3rd XI this year which has been fantastic. With more fixtures in the new year, we hope they can build on their performance against Millfield earlier this term.

The 1st XI has had a fine term and were unbeaten until the last 32 of the national cup against a strong Reading Blue Coats side, who showed us what the next step looks like for us as a school. The boys however are through to the next group stage of the county champs and the quarter finals of the Poole Schools League, both to be played in the new year.

The 2nd XI has done equally well, winning on penalties at Marlborough in R3, but narrowly going out on penalties in R4 of the national cup to a tough Bradfield College side. However, they are also through to the quarter finals of the Poole Schools League.

We also had our U14 and U16 sides in action this side of Christmas showing our intent to push on with our football. We look forward to the season proper.

Netball

The Netball girls continue to go from strength to strength as we strive to upset the hierarchy in the county playing a brand very much in the mould of Mr Hole. Time will tell, but with a young squad gelling this year the future is certainly bright as has been seen with wins over our more immediate local rivals and performances, but narrow defeats against the larger independents.

Rugby

Both the boys and girls have had a great term. With three senior girls' sides playing alongside 18 boys' sides it has been a jam-packed autumn term with over 100 rugby fixtures played, including some 7s in Y7 and Y8 at Millfield as well as some conditioned games at both Millfield and Dauntsey's with C teams. There have been 10s games at the Dorset Invitational, and we started the term with 12s matches for both our U15 and U16 boys.

Frustratingly our biggest blocks were disrupted by the weather including our finale where we were due to have 14 boys' sides out at Eton. Despite the weather it has been an excellent season with huge growth and grit shown as we have taken on some of the country's best.

My personal highlights were the 1st XV victory at Bryanston, but also the gritty losses that showed that playing is about much more than just the winning. These days were up there with the recent girl's fixture against Gryphon, whilst on another afternoon Britford was packed with 100s of U13s playing Dauntsey's with all the other 6F sporting action going on at the same time. To see Britford so alive with sports people is always so rewarding.

The U15 had a decent National Plate run as did the 1st XV who were knocked out in the last 32 of the National Cup to a strong RGSHW who could go all the way.

Our attention turns to 7s in the new year, with some exciting tournaments and draws to come.

Squash

Our squash boys convincingly won their first-round matches in the national comp and progress to the next group stage against Epsom and Reeds in the new year. We have high hopes for this crop of players as they continue to perform as a team, but also as individuals on the regional/national circuit.

Tennis

The senior sides have been training all term as the boys and girls play in the senior closed competition. The girls despite defeat took our first sets off Talbot Heath in 4 years of trying, while the A and B boys sides complete their groups in the New Year.

The Y8 side travelled to West Buckland for the second year running in the knockout stages of their competition to come up agonisingly short for the second year running.

With the main season around Easter there is still plenty more to look forward to including the opportunity to play our friends King's Paramatta from Australia in July when they visit on tour.

Beyond BWS & The Future

Our athletes continue to excel beyond the realms of BWS with our swimmers T Parker-Minty and F Sadler hitting national standard times in the pool and individual PBs. M Stahl continues his progress within fencing ranking 32nd in the country overall.

While beyond school our alumni continue to impress, Cadan Murley back in fine form with Harlequins and Vaughn Covil recently returned from representing the USA U23 football side in Santiago.

Finally, whilst myself and Caroline Popham have been relatively quiet publicly I know she has been working hard behind the scenes on grants for the all-weather training surface at Britford and cricket nets. Whilst we are at around the £60k mark, we are still some way short and continue to look for support.

As we look forward to the break and time to re-energise with family, I hope our sports people keep one eye on what is to come so we can kick on in the New Year.

Thank you once again to all our volunteers, staff, parents, and students for making this term so enjoyable on all fronts, it really has been a pleasure, and whilst the break is welcome, I know we look forward at what is to come.

Best wishes for the Christmas season.

Richard

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