



FIVE ACRES HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

30 January 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. In the new year many of us will have made resolutions, I hope that you are continuing to have success with any you have made. At Five Acres High School our continued resolutions are around maximising lesson time, hearing the voice of students and engaging students in the wider life of the school. With this in mind, it has been a pleasure to see students make their first contributions to our newly-launched Student Council. We hope that this will give all students an opportunity to feel part of the continued improvements that we are making.

Five Acres High School continues to be an excellent place for students to learn. We were thrilled this week to receive a letter from the Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson, commending the school for its work with disadvantaged students and highlighting the outcomes that these students in particular receive, which enable them to access a range of post-16 opportunities. This has been coupled with our ongoing work for the Department for Education where we offer support to schools in the local area and wider South West district around attendance and behaviour. With only 90 schools in the country being accepted onto this programme as lead schools, this is a huge accolade for us and for our local area. I want to acknowledge the contribution that students and families make to enable us to support schools in these ways. Your commitment to our educational offer and the way in which you support our high expectations, alongside your drive to ensure that your children make the most of their school days, brings deserved recognition. It is nice to see government ministers acknowledging that here in the Forest of Dean we provide education that people can be proud of.

Some of you will have been aware of the recent discussions in the media about the use of social media by under-16s and the general use of mobile phones amongst children. I would like to take this opportunity to report that the DfE has strengthened its advice to schools regarding the use of mobile phones. It has mandated that mobile phones should not play any part in the school day for students. This has always been our policy at Five Acres High School, therefore we will continue working with students to ensure they understand what this means in practice. We would appreciate your further support by ensuring that any

contact you wish to have regarding your child during the school day goes directly through the school admin team. This will remove any temptation that students may have to check their phones and inadvertently find themselves at risk of sanctions. We understand



that students will still want to carry a mobile phone, especially if they are using them for bus passes or as a safety aid whilst walking to and from school, but I must reiterate that we do not accept the use of a mobile phone without the permission of an accompanying staff member anywhere on the school site during a normal school day. Thank you in advance for your further cooperation with this.

Since the start of January, our Years 7-10 students have participated in a full range of assessments. I look forward to celebrating their efforts and results with you in the coming weeks. Teachers have reported that the preparation of many has been exceptional; thank you for supporting your children to develop good routines and habits leading up to these assessments.

Assessments are a useful time for us to understand the ongoing needs of individual students. We were delighted to receive some very positive feedback for our work within the school in preparing students for their education by visitors from our Trust over the last week. Feedback from government ministers, Trust members, students and yourselves all contributes to helping develop the school moving forward. Over the next couple of months, we will be providing opportunities for students and parents to complete our annual surveys, and we will add these results to our recently completed staff survey.

Not only do we enjoy receiving feedback from these various sources we enjoy the support we get from people and organisations within our community. We were delighted to receive funding to enable us to purchase books for Year 7 from The Bell's Foundation, see page 2. I hope that you enjoy reading more about our exceptional students in this edition, and encourage you and our students to send in celebratory items that help to inspire others, such as Daisy in this edition.

GYMNASTICS SUCCESS



Year 7 student Daisy M, has been selected to attend South West Development Squad Training. Daisy attends the Forest of Dean Gymnastics Club. Training an impressive 14 hours a week, Daisy also gives back to the club by volunteering 4 hours each week to support recreational classes and inspire younger gymnasts. Her commitment both inside and outside the gym reflects the true spirit of the Forest of Dean community.

Daisy was one of only four gymnasts chosen by the county - a remarkable recognition of her hard work, talent, and dedication to the sport. She will be training at Bristol Hawks Gym Club, South Devon Gym Club at Paignton, Exeter Gym Club and Wiltshire school of Gymnastics in Melksham.

We couldn't be prouder of all she has accomplished. Congratulations, Daisy, and the very best of luck as you take this exciting next step in your gymnastics journey.

TENTORS TRAINING EVENT - LLANBEDR HILL

We were thrilled with our students' performance during their recent 13-mile trek across Llanbedr Hill on Sunday 25 January. This journey was a fantastic opportunity for them to develop their foundational skills in technical navigation, including using compass bearings and identifying different landforms on a map. They also began practicing strategic planning by exploring how pacing and timing affect their progress, with each student learning how to estimate time based on their individual step counts.

Working in small groups of two and three, the students took turns navigating the entire team to various waypoints, which was a wonderful step towards building their confidence and peer leadership. The experience was made even more special by the local ponies and farm animals grazing nearby, which kept spirits high and added a touch of nature's magic to the day.

Throughout the entire hike, the group maintained a remarkably positive, friendly, supportive, and enthusiastic outlook. We are so proud of the progress they have made so far and are looking forward to supporting them as they continue their development in the next training session.



KEY DATES

Thursday 5 February
Year 9 Parents' Evening

Friday 6 February
Mock Parliament Session 1

Monday 9 February
Year 7 & 8 School Disco

Wednesday 11 February
Year 9 School Disco

Thursday 12 February
Celebrations Evening

Friday 13 February
SEND Pupil Passport/Learning Support Plan Reviews (online)

Monday 16 February - Friday 20 February
Half Term

Tuesday 17 February - Friday 20 February
Year 11 Champions School revision sessions

Week commencing 23 February
Year 11 PPEs

Wednesday 25 February
Year 8 HPV vaccination session

Friday 27 February - Sunday 1 March
TenTors

Sunday 28 February - Sunday 7 March
Ski Trip, Aprica Italy

Week commencing 2 March
Year 11 PPEs

Thursday 5 March
Year 8 Parents' Evening

Wednesday 11 March
Governors Meeting

Friday 20 March - Sunday 22 March
TenTors

Wednesday 25 March
Year 11 Parents' Information Evening - Subject Specific Workshops

Friday 27 March
Year 11 Macbeth theatre trip

Monday 30 March - Friday 10 April
Easter Holidays

Friday 24 April - Sunday 26 April
TenTors

Tuesday 5 May
Governors Meeting

Friday 22 May - Tuesday 26 May
Multisport trip

Thursday 4 June
Year 10 Parents' Information Evening

Week commencing 15 June
Year 7-10 Assessments

Week commencing 22 June
Year 7-10 Assessments

Tuesday 23 & Wednesday 24 June
Great Western Heartstarters

MAYOR'S CADETS FOR 2026

Huge congratulations to Year 9 student Kimberley and Year 10 student Harvey, who were chosen to be this year's Mayor's Cadets. Mayor, Nick Penny, selects two young people who are part of uniformed organisations - Kimberley is a girl guide and member of the air cadets, and Harvey is a member of the sea cadets - to join him at official events and represent the young people of Coleford and surrounding areas. They will also be involved in organising events to benefit Coleford's young people and have the opportunity to fundraise for causes that they are passionate about. Well done!



SPARX MATHS

Students have shown great determination this term to achieve over 1 million correct questions on Sparx Maths. Well done and keep your ambition high!



ACADEMIES & SOCIETIES - TERM 2



Overall Academies and Societies List for Term 2

Day	Lunch Time	After School 3-4pm
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Tennis in 10 Block (bring own bat) 1pm • Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y8 1pm 	
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Tennis in 10 Block (bring own bat) 1pm • Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y7 1pm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography Academy (Y10, Room 1) • Girls Football (Y7 & 8) • Dance Academy (All years in 10 Block) • Musical Rehearsal
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Tennis in 10 Block (bring own bat) 1pm • Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y10 1pm • Y11 GCSE PE Table Tennis 1pm 10 block • Book Club in Library 1:15pm (Y7 & Y8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pottery Society- (week A All years Room 5) • Boys Football (all years) • Girls Netball (Y9 &10) • Rock Band (Week B Y7-9) • Musical Rehearsal
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Tennis in 10 Block (bring own bat) 1pm • Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y9 • Book Club in Library 1:15pm (Y9 & Y10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls Netball (Y7 &8) • Y10 GCSE PE Badminton in Blue Gym • Table Tennis in 10 Block (Y8 & 9)
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Tennis in 10 Block (bring own bat) 1pm • Bible Study Club Society (All years. Rm 20, 1:10pm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board games/card games Society (All years, room 21) • Lego Society and Craft Society- (All years, room 21). • Darts Academy (All years, 10 block). • Musical Rehearsal

UPDATES FROM HEADS OF YEAR

MR JONES - HEAD OF YEAR 7

It was wonderful to kick-off January with a Head of Year Celebration Assembly in the first week back. It was great to see so many Amazon vouchers flying out for the blank and white Standards Card draw held on the last day of term as well as seeing all the names being recognised in Teacher Shoutouts. 75 students (half of the year group) were in the wheel for having zero negatives so far, which is super impressive - Amara was the lucky winner. 50 students had 100% attendance in the year to date, which is also super impressive - Freddie W was the lucky winner. I also wanted to recognise Kindness so we had a wheel for the 41 students who have received 1 or more Kindness tokens, which is lovely to see - Maddy was the lucky winner.



Mr Phelps has foregrounded how important it is that students have a sense of belonging and I believe that is becoming more and more evident in Year 7. The second of our three key words in Y7 is "integrate" and I believe Y7 students are really getting involved and feeling a part of our school community now. This can be seen in my regular Student Voice sessions, where Y7s have said some lovely things about life at Five Acres High School but also made some pertinent recommendations to improve it further. The School Council is now also up and running, the Y7 representatives have already been recognised for the positive contribution they are making.

Character Education is a great marker for how students feel a sense of belonging and personal success and the badges have been flying out onto the lapels of Y7s. 7SWS are leading the way with 111 Character Education badges with 7EUO not far behind with 90. We can also see that students feel that they belong here because Y7 attendance continues to be so impressive - 96.7% for the first week back with a bang!

It has also been lovely to read so many postcards of recognition for Y7s that relate to revising and preparing for their first set of assessments. It is clear that so many Y7s are also striving for academic success. Well done Year 7. You belong here and are thriving at Five!

MR ROBBINS - HEAD OF YEAR 9

We have made a brilliant start in January following the Christmas break, and as a year group we have truly hit the ground running. Students are doing fantastically well, showing real maturity and commitment, particularly as this has been such an important month for thinking about options and the GCSE pathways ahead. The conversations, questions and reflections students have been engaging in around their choices have been really encouraging, and it is clear many are starting to take real ownership of their futures. I am excited to see enthusiastic, confident individuals ready to step into Year 10 after this period of decision-making, and I am sure that, with continued support at home and in school, they will approach the next stage of their journey with energy, positivity and determination.



MR BURKE - HEAD OF YEAR 10

As we move further into the academic year, the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 is now firmly complete. I have been incredibly impressed by how the majority of the cohort has stepped up to the increased rigour of their GCSE courses. It has been a joy to walk through the corridors and see Year 10s in action - from intricate experiments in the Science labs to the creative energy flowing in the Art and Drama classrooms. A huge shoutout to our top-performing tutor group (10ESN) who are currently leading the way in attendance. Being in the room is the single biggest factor in GCSE success! Work experience preparations are well underway. This is a vital opportunity for students to step outside of their comfort zone and gain a glimpse into the professional world. If your child has not yet secured a placement, now is the time to act. Local opportunities fill up quickly as other schools in the area often share the same dates. Please speak to Miss Harris about securing work placements.



UPDATES FROM HEADS OF YEAR

MR HAYWARD - HEAD OF YEAR 11



As we move further into the Spring term, we are entering one of the most significant phases of your school journey. The finish line is in sight, and the work you put in over the coming weeks will play a massive role in defining your summer success.

Your Pre-Public Exams (PPEs) will officially begin on Friday 6 February. It is vital that you understand the importance of this specific set of exams. These are the last PPEs you will sit before the actual GCSE exams in the summer. This is your "Dress Rehearsal." This is your opportunity to:

- Test your knowledge: Find out exactly what you know and, more importantly, highlight the gaps you need to fill before the real thing.
- Experience the pressure: Get used to the exam hall environment so that in the summer, it feels routine rather than scary.
- Make mistakes now: It is far better to make a mistake in February and learn from it than to make it in May or June.

Treat these with the same level of seriousness as the real GCSEs. A strong performance here will give you a massive confidence boost and a clear roadmap for your final revision months.

While focused on your current exams, you must also keep one eye on the future. We are currently seeing a wave of excitement across the year group as most students have already submitted their applications for colleges and sixth forms. In fact, many of your peers are already receiving conditional offers and securing their places for September. If you have not applied yet, you must act now.

- Don't miss out: Popular courses fill up quickly. By delaying, you risk missing out on your first-choice subject or college.
- Peace of mind: Having an offer in your pocket takes a huge weight off your shoulders. It gives you a tangible goal to work towards during your revision.
- Support is available: If you are unsure where to apply or how to write your personal statement, please speak to your tutor, Miss Harris, myself or the careers team immediately.

Good luck with your revision!

BELL'S FOUNDATION SUPPORT OUR READING PROGRAMME

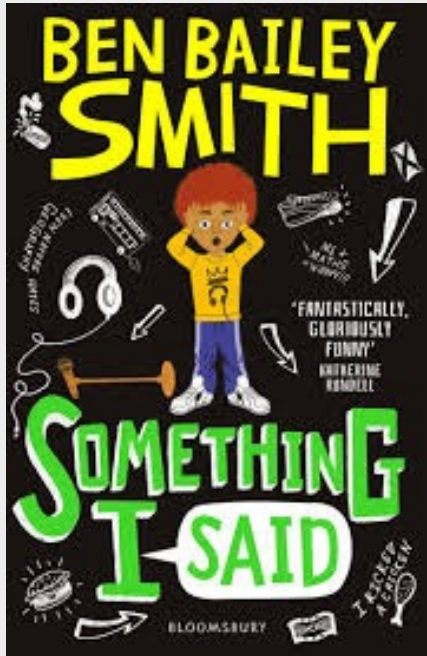
Thank you to the Bell's Foundation for the gift our Year 7s received in the form of a book at the end of last term. Every Year 7 was gifted a book to help them with their learning journey at Five Acres. The Bell's Foundation is a local charity who provide grants to students in the Forest of Dean enabling them to access higher education by removing financial barriers.



READING RECOMMENDATIONS

English Teacher, Mrs Langton shares her picks for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

KEY STAGE 3



Something I Said by Ben Bailey Smith

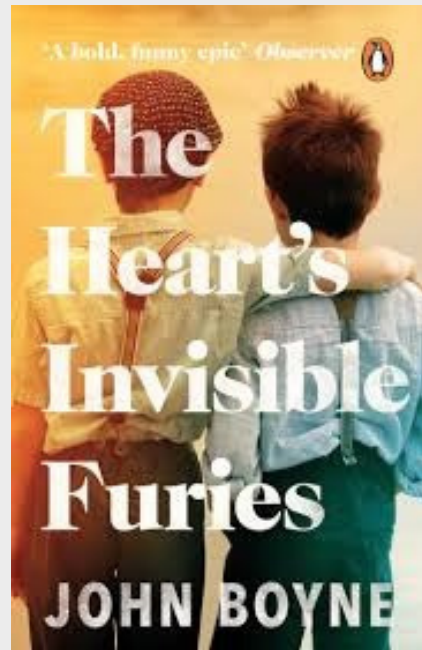
From comedian, actor, rapper and screenwriter Ben Bailey Smith comes a blazingly funny, big-hearted story about family, friendship and how far one boy will go to get a laugh. Perfect for fans of David Baddiel and Frank Cottrell-Boyce.

For 13-year-old Carmichael Taylor, life is one big joke - in a good way. He just can't understand why no one else seems to find everything as funny as he does.

When Car is filmed stumbling into performing a piece of hilarious stand-up at the school talent show - targeting his family, school and friends - the footage ends up creating international infamy. But with the promise of fame and fortune comes trouble, and it's up to Car to decide what or who he's willing to risk to chase his comedy dream.

Get ready to laugh at life with this heart-warming, unashamedly honest and hilarious look at family, friendship and what really matters.

KEY STAGE 4



The Heart's Invisible Furies by John Boyne

Cyril Avery is not a real Avery. At least, that's what his parents make sure to remind him. Adopted as a baby, he feels more and more disconnected with the family that treats him more as a curious pet, rather than a beloved son.

So, as a young adult, Cyril decides to embark on a quest to find his place in the world. Sometimes misguided and often in the wrong place at the wrong time, life has dealt him a difficult hand but Cyril is resolute that he can change things, and find the courage to be himself.

And in doing so, his story will come across that of Catherine Goggin, a young, pregnant woman finding herself alone and isolated at only 16. There is a place in the world for both of them, and Cyril is determined to find it.

**BOTH AVAILABLE IN THE
SCHOOL LIBRARY**

CHRISTMAS CARD DONATIONS

Thank you to everyone who donated their Christmas Cards for the Cobalt Unit's recycling appeal.



UNIFORM DONATIONS

If you are updating your child's uniform we would be grateful of any donations to help support more families through our Nearly New Uniform shop. Donations can be left at Reception, Monday - Friday, from 8am - 4pm.

UNIFORM DONATIONS

If your child has left Five Acres High School or you are considering purchasing new uniform, we would be grateful of donations of school uniform and PE kit to support our Nearly New Uniform Shop



Drop-off Location - Reception
8am-4pm

STUDENT COUNCIL

Our student council is now up and running and we were delighted to present the chairs from each year group with their badges. The first meeting was held on 15 January and will continue to be an excellent way for staff to hear the voice of our students.



YEAR 11 FEBRUARY HALF TERM CHAMPIONS SCHOOL

We are delighted to make you aware that we will be running Year 11 Champions School over the half term break, from 17 February to 20 February. The sessions will run across the week from 9am-11.30am and/or 12pm-2.30pm. Please sign your child up for the sessions they wish to attend via the Google form: <https://forms.gle/v665k4sik2ZDXzW68>

	Monday, 16th Feb	Tuesday, 17th Feb	Wednesday, 18th Feb	Thursday, 19th Feb	Friday, 20th Feb
9am-11.30am		Art - Unit 1 (catch-up & improvement and independent work for Unit 2)	English Language: Paper 2	English Literature: Unseen Poetry	History - Chepstow Castle
	School Closed	GCSE PE - Coursework: Finishing Touches - RM25	Maths Higher	Maths aiming for Grade 8+/Further Maths Crossover Content	Photography: Unit 1 (catch-up and improvement) and Unit 2 (further development)
		D&T: Theory	Economics: Paper 1 & Paper 2 - Effective Chains of Logic, Evaluation & Using Case Studies		
		English Literature: Poetry Anthology			
12 pm-2.30pm		Art - Unit 1 (catch-up & improvement and independent work for Unit 2)	Maths Foundation/Crossover	Maths Foundation	
	School Closed	GCSE PE - Coursework: Finishing Touches - RM25	Business - Paper 1 and Paper 2 - Key Skills for Evaluation and Using Data		
		English Literature: Lord of the Flies			

SARAH GREEN - AUTHOR VISIT

On Wednesday 28 January, Year 7 students were visited by the author Sarah Green and her colleague Roger Haines. The year group are currently studying her novel 'Rowan: Leader of the Deer Kin' in English, following the journey of the hero as they overcome obstacles. Students were inspired by the local setting, which prompted them to ask a variety of questions. As a reading school, we are excited to support the Department for Education's National Year of Reading project; we are always looking for new opportunities for students to read for pleasure. Bobby and Nika showed their enthusiasm by purchasing copies in the library at lunch time. Following her visit, Sarah contacted us to say: "I really enjoyed the visit. I thought the students were wonderful. They treated me with great warmth and unflinching courtesy. They were very enthusiastic about the book, and also about writing. They are a real credit to the school and their parents".



GROWS CREATIVE INDUSTRIES EVENT

We're excited to let you know about an upcoming GROWS event, designed especially for Year 10 students to help inspire their curiosity, confidence, and future aspirations.

The first event on offer is Creative Industries – an opportunity to discover creative subjects, courses, and careers in a fun and hands-on way. Students will try different subject areas using industry-standard kit at university campus locations. All sessions are led by experts. This event will take place on 7 and 14 March 2026. Our Five Acres High School has given priority places until 14 February.

Venues:

The University of Gloucestershire – Park Campus
South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (UC Wise) - Transport will be provided for South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (UC Wise) from the University of Gloucestershire's Oxstalls Campus (timings TBC).

If your child is interested, they can sign up via this link - www.grows.ac.uk/creative You can find further information about this and all Grows events at www.grows.ac.uk.



CHARACTER EDUCATION SHIELD PRESENTATIONS

Congratulations to students from across all year groups who were recently presented with Character Education shields and certificates. The number of students working on projects in and out of school to earn their rewards is impressive. Special mention to Year 9 student Jack for being awarded his Kindness shield.



SEND PUPIL PASSPORT/LEARNING SUPPORT PLAN REVIEWS - FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2026

SchoolCloud is now live for you to book a slot to review your child's Pupil Passport/Learning Support Plan. The online booking platform can be reached on the website 5acres.schoolcloud.co.uk, where you will be able to book your slot for Friday 13 February, by adding your details as indicated on the screen.

We do hope you will take up the offer to review your child's Pupil Passport/Learning Support Plan so that we can make sure that strategies and provision are up to date and meaningful.

An email with further information on the above has been sent to all parents/carers of SEND students. We look forward to hearing from you.



Tickets are available at lunch time in the hub from 22nd January

VALENTINE'S DAY

Specials

Ticket: £6
(Includes £3 snack and drink voucher)

YEAR 7 & 8 DISCO

Day: 9th February 2026
Venue: 10 Block
Time: 5pm to 7pm

More food and drinks can be bought at the venue

YEAR 9 DISCO

Day: 11th February 2026
Venue: 10 Block
Time: 5pm to 7pm

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

THE SEALED KNOT and COLEFORD TOWN COUNCIL presents

The Battle of COLEFORD 1643



MEMORIAL PARADE

Saturday 21st February 2026 at 11:30AM
Market Place, Coleford

MUSKET & PIKE DISPLAY

GSW Music Hub

STRIMMING SPECIAL

STARTING 13TH JANUARY 2026

A ukulele group for adults and children to learn and improve their ukulele skills together.

TUESDAY 7:30 - 8:30

ST WHITES SCHOOL
CINDERFORD

Scan QR for more info



Two FREE TASTER SESSIONS!

Contact:
www.gloucestershiremusic.co.uk
glosmusic@gloucestershire.gov.uk
01452 427242



HEROES WELCOME

COULD YOU RESCUE A DOG?

CHANNEL 4'S *The Dog House* IS BACK!

APPLY NOW

C4THEDOGHOUSE TAKEPART.CO.UK



GSW Music Hub

FOREST

Scan QR for more info



STRING STARTERS

Beginner group violin lessons for adults and children to learn in a supportive and relaxed environment.

TUESDAY 6:30 - 7:30

ST WHITES SCHOOL
CINDERFORD

Two FREE TASTER SESSIONS!

STARTING 13TH JANUARY 2026

Contact:
www.gloucestershiremusic.co.uk
glosmusic@gloucestershire.gov.uk
01452 427242



Its 2026 Prom time!!

Your dream dress is waiting for you..

Get in touch now to secure your appointment!

@bydesignngloucester

01452 414 174

info@bridalwearandballgowns.co.uk

Tuesday - Saturday
10am - 5pm




COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

GLOUCESTERSHIRE BEYOND 16

7th February 2026
10am to 1pm

At: Taylored Mentoring Services
76 Kingsholm Road, GL1 3BD

An opportunity for families of young people with **SEND** in Year 7 and above to meet with the county's providers and support services to start planning for next steps after Year 11

Free parking on site and refreshments available
(Pre 10 AM access for Professionals set-up)



Register your interest now:



SPECIAL HALF TERM OPENING
WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2026
10.00AM TO 4.00PM



Meteor Business Park,
Cheltenham Road East,
Gloucester GL2 9QL.
Tel 01452 260078
www.jetagemuseum.org

ADMISSION FREE
DONATIONS WELCOME

22nd GLOUCESTERSHIRE Young Photographer of the Year 2026

We invite all Gloucestershire pupils to enter **ONE** Image - any subject

PRIMARY & SECONDARY AWARDS

FIRST PRIZE £75
& RUNNER UP CASH PRIZES

Best Secondary & Primary School Entry
GYP TROPHY



SELECTED IMAGES will be CINEMA PROJECTED

at the Awards evening, THE BACON THEATRE, CHELTENHAM
Wednesday APRIL 29th

ENTRIES CLOSE
FRIDAY
MARCH
20th

For further information ask your teacher or visit:
www.cheltenhamcameraclub.co.uk
email: GYP@cheltenhamcameraclub.co.uk

Please submit your entry to your school representative before the closing date

Organised by Cheltenham Camera Club
Supported by Cheltenham Arts Council
& Cheltenham Round Table



ORA SINGERS Young Composers

Are you interested in composing?

APPLY FOR THE 2026 YOUNG COMPOSERS' PROGRAMME
to get FREE mentoring in composition with the award-winning ORA Singers!

YOUNG COMPOSERS

- Receive 10 hours of one-to-one mentoring with professional composers
- Write a new piece for ORA Singers
- Attend a workshop with ORA Singers who sing through your sketches and give tailored feedback
- Have your new piece performed and recorded in concert by ORA Singers in front of industry professionals

APPRENTICES

- Receive first-class mentoring through a course of online Composition Workshops
- Fast-track composition skills with coaching on techniques and regular feedback
- Meet with industry professionals & undergraduates and gain an insight into the professional world of composition
- Write a new short choral piece

FIND OUT MORE AND APPLY NOW AT

www.orasingers.com/young-composers

Applications close Thursday 12th February 2026

