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EDITOR'S NOTE

WRITTEN BY MRS STARR

Welcome to a brand-new school year and to another exciting issue of The Mark! This issue was originally planned for release in Term 6 of the 2025–2026 academic year, but we are incredibly proud to finally share it with you as we begin the 2026–2027 school year. What better way to start the year than by celebrating the creativity, talent and achievements of our students?

Inside, you will find a fantastic collection of creative writing from students across the school, including the winning entries from last academic year's World Book Day Writing Competition. A huge congratulations to Logan C and Ethan A for their wonderful writing!

There is plenty more to discover too, including an important announcement from Liv H about litter around the school site, as well as an interesting article exploring the work of artist Bridget Riley.

As always, The Mark is created for students, by students, and we are always looking for new writers, journalists, reviewers and creative minds to join us. If you would like to get involved, come and find us at the KS3 Clubs Fair on Tuesday 15th September or the KS5 Clubs and Societies Fair on Wednesday 16th September.

We cannot wait to see what this new school year brings. Happy reading — and perhaps your writing will feature in the next issue of The Mark!

**WRITERS
WANTED!
WEDNESDAY
LUNCH IN L6**

**CONTACT MRS STARR WITH ANY
ENQUIRIES AT
LSTARR@RMET.ORG**



WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE DRUGS

Drugs can have a serious impact on health, education, relationships, and future opportunities. In this informative article, Muhammad Ibraheem R in Year 8 explains why choosing to stay drug free is one of the most important decisions young people can make.



Taking drugs is a serious issue that affects many young people around the world. As Year 7 students, we are at an important stage in our lives where our bodies and brains are still growing. Choosing not to take drugs is one of the best decisions we can make for our health, our future, and the people around us.

First of all, drugs can seriously damage your health. Many drugs harm important organs such as the brain, heart, and lungs. Because teenagers are still developing, drugs can have even stronger and more dangerous effects on them. They can cause memory loss, difficulty concentrating, and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Some drugs can even lead to an overdose, which can be life threatening. Staying drug free helps keep your body strong and your mind clear.

Secondly, drugs can affect your education and future goals. When someone takes drugs, it often becomes harder for them to focus in class, complete homework, and perform well in exams. This can lead to falling behind at school and missing out on opportunities. Many careers require responsibility, clear thinking, and good decision making. Taking drugs can make it difficult to achieve your dreams and limits your future choices.

Another important reason to avoid drugs is the impact on relationships. Drug use can change a person's behaviour. It can cause mood swings, aggression, or dishonesty. This may damage the trust of friends and family. The people who care about you want you to be safe and healthy. Choosing not to take drugs shows respect for yourself and for them.

Finally, drugs can lead to addiction. Addiction means feeling unable to stop using something, even when you know it is harmful. Addiction can take away your freedom and control over your own life. It can also lead to serious financial and legal problems. Avoiding drugs completely is the safest way to prevent addiction.

In conclusion, taking drugs can harm your health, damage your education, hurt your relationships, and affect your future. By choosing to stay drug free, we can protect our wellbeing and give ourselves the best chance of success in life.

WRITTEN BY MUHAMMAD IBRAHEEM R

DON'T SPRINKLE LITTER, IT'S NOT GLITTER!

Even though Mrs Hart has done an assembly on our litter, I believe this crisis needs to be raised across our school again. As a member of Eco Club and a group of litter pickers, I have seen all of the litter across the school grounds and how hard it is to keep under control. When we do litter picking, we'll clear it up one week and the next week it's all back.

At Eco Club we have the responsibility to look after the hedgehog house which is located near the football field. The litter around this area is worse than anywhere else around the school that I have seen. This is not a clean environment for hedgehogs or any type of animal. Recently when litter picking, we found snails living in crisp packets and on plastic bags. Plants are growing on top of rubbish, which seems like it has been there for a long time.

I'd like you to think about how bad this is for the animals; for them litter can be mistaken as a tasty treat. This is a huge problem for wildlife, as this may fill their stomachs with plastics and other rubbish instead of energy inside of rich foods they need to survive. Estimates suggest that litter found on the roadsides, such as bottles and cans, kill about 3 million small animals every year.

Litter is extremely bad for the environment. Most litter takes a long time to biodegrade; here is how long some items take (approximately):

Crisp packets – 80 years

Plastic bags – 20-500 years

Plastic bottles – 450 years

Aluminium foil (tin foil) – 100-500 years

Chewing gum – 5-50 years

Sweet packets – 10-20 years

Cardboard – 2 months

Pens – 200+ years

Tissues - 2 months

White-board pens – 1000

If you want to help keep our school clear of litter and help the animals to thrive, come join us at Eco Club on a Wednesday lunchtime in the school garden. You can also join our litter picking group on Thursdays during form time. We meet in the quad. Hopefully see you there!



Litter near the hedgehog house



5 minutes of litter picking!



DRAWN BY BLAKE S

DEBATE CLUB COMPETITION FINAL!

After weeks of fierce competition, the first-ever RMGS Debate Competition reached an exciting finale, with students debating whether all NHS appointments should be free of charge for every UK citizen. Out of 11 teams, the Opposition team of Zara O, Olivia M and Oakley O emerged as worthy champions.

The first-ever RMGS Debate Competition came to an exciting conclusion with a closely contested final debate on the motion: "All NHS appointments should be free of charge for every UK citizen."

The event was organised and hosted by Phoebe W, who also served as moderator for the final.

Representing the Proposition were Maria A and Jason N, who argued passionately in favour of the motion. The Opposition team, consisting of Zara O, Olivia M and Oakley O, presented a strong and persuasive case against the proposal.

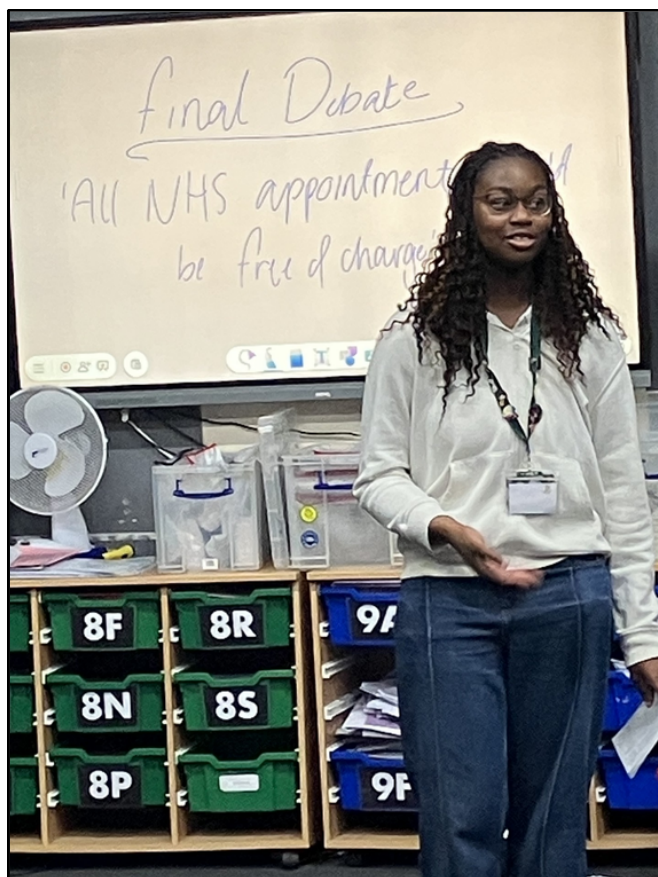
The debate was judged by Alicia G (student judge) and Emily F (prefect), who praised both teams for their excellent research, clear arguments and confident delivery.

After careful deliberation, the judges awarded victory to the Opposition team of Zara O, Olivia M and Oakley O, making them the champions of the inaugural RMGS Debate Competition.

A total of 11 teams took part in the tournament, demonstrating impressive enthusiasm, critical thinking and public speaking skills throughout the competition.

Congratulations to all participants, and a special thank you to Phoebe and the judges for helping to make the event such a success. Following the success of this year's competition, we are delighted to announce that the RMGS Debate Competition will return next year!

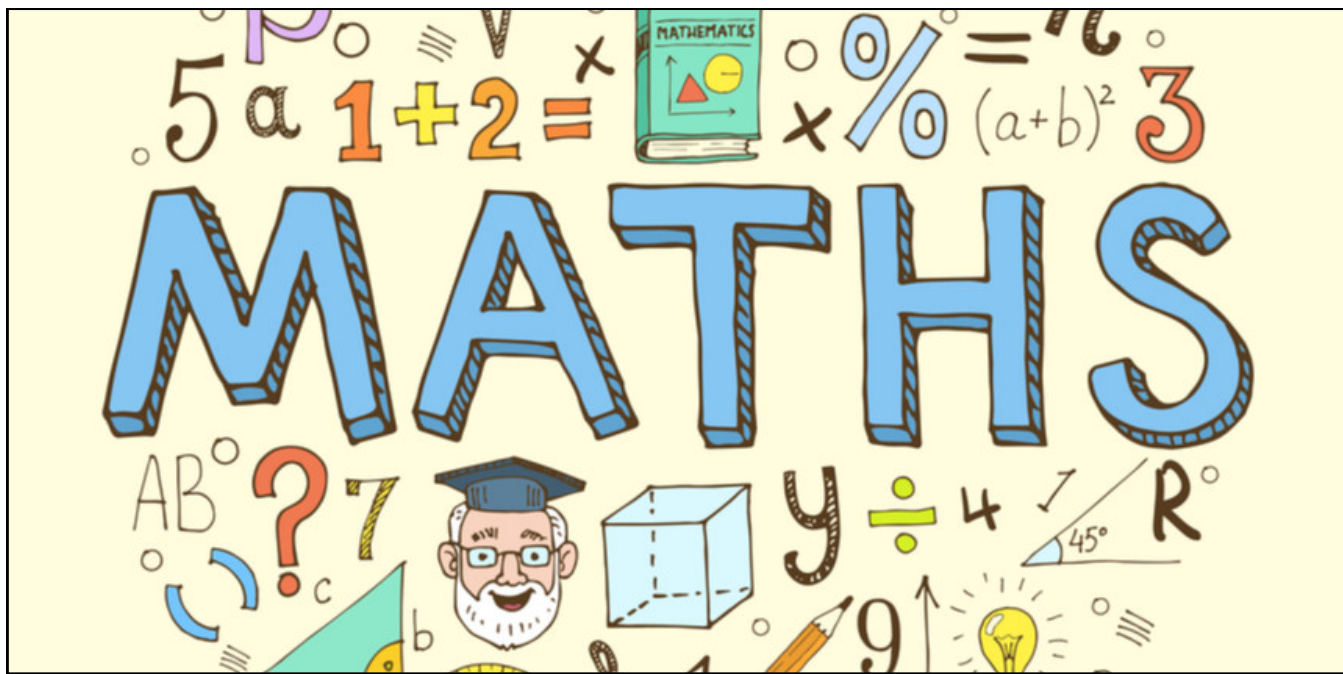
SEE PICTURES FROM THE EVENT ON THE
NEXT PAGE!



DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

MATHS

Discover what makes the Maths Department unique as teachers share their favourite topics, teaching methods, and advice for success. This insightful interview was written by Ethan A in Year 8 as part of the Department Spotlight series.



In the third edition of Department Spotlight, I was able to interview the Maths Department and ask them some questions about their subject. This was their response:

What do you think makes your department stand out from others in the school?

Ms Hargreaves mentioned that Maths is a subject that nurtures all students' abilities. Mr Chapman added that Maths appears in all subjects, making it a universal language that helps us understand the world. Ms Pollard stated that they get involved in many activities, such as World Book Day, and believe that everyone can be successful in Maths.

How do you try to make your lessons engaging and enjoyable for students?

To make lessons more engaging, Ms Terry uses songs so students can remember connections, Ms Murphy Saffet uses whiteboards, Ms Pollard breaks her lessons down into tasks, and Ms Hargreaves uses visual representations to help students "see" the maths.

What skills or values do you hope students take away from studying your subject?

Ms Murphy Saffet hopes students will develop strong problem solving skills. Ms Hargreaves aims for her students to demonstrate resilience and responsibility. Ms Terry endeavours to help students present mathematical concepts logically and sequentially, and Ms Pollard strives to ensure that students develop confidence as mathematicians so they can apply logical thinking to real life situations.

Can you share a recent project, trip or achievement that the department is particularly proud of?

The Maths Department is proud of its trip to Disneyland Paris for a Year 10 maths conference and the fact that the students who attended had a fantastic time. The department is also looking forward to the upcoming Year 9 trip to Chessington, where students will attend a workshop called Fantastic Forces and study roller coasters.

What advice would you give to students who want to excel in your subject?

Mr Chapman advises students to work hard, never give up, and ask for help when they need it. Ms Pollard encourages students to stay attentive and show their working out. Ms Terry recommends regular practice and revision, and Ms Hargreaves encourages students to rise to every challenge.

If your department were a person, what kind of personality would they have?

The teachers decided that, if the Maths Department were a person, they would be friendly, kind, patient, determined, approachable, consistent, and caring.

And finally, what topic do you love teaching most in your department?

Ms Pollard and Ms Murphy Saffet both chose algebra as their favourite topic to teach. Ms Hargreaves's favourite topics are polynomial functions and loci, while Mr Chapman enjoys teaching every area of Maths.

My lunch with the Maths teachers was delightful, and it was a pleasure to interview them. Keep an eye out for Issue 10 to discover which department will be interviewed next!

WRITTEN BY ETHAN A

BRIDGET RILEY: LIFE, ART, AND ILLUSION

Discover the life, artistic development, and lasting influence of Bridget Riley, one of Britain's most celebrated contemporary artists. In this fascinating feature, Daniel K in Year 9 explores Riley's inspirations, achievements, and distinctive visual style.

In early February, I came on a family trip to see the exhibition 'Bridget Riley: Learning to See' at the Turner Contemporary in Margate. I have been inspired by the artist's style and history to bring you an overview of her life and inspirations.

Early Life and Career

Bridget Riley was born in Norwood, London on 24th April 1931 and relocated with her mother and sister to Cornwall in World War II. Following the war, Riley attended Cheltenham Ladies' College from 1946 to 1948 before studying art at Goldsmith's College, London from 1949 to 1952 and the Royal College of Art from 1952 to 1956. She suffered a breakdown due to the deterioration of her father's health from 1956 to 1959.

Riley began her working career at a glassware shop, moving on to become a part-time illustrator at J. Walter Thompson until 1962. Her work at JWT from 1958 to 1959 showed elements of pointillism, a technique that uses small, distinct dots of colour to form an image. In 1959, Riley met the painter and



art educator Maurice de Sausmarez at a residential summer school that he ran with Harry Thubron and Diane Thubron. De Sausmarez became a friend and mentor to Riley, inspiring her to look closer at Futurism, Divisionism and the works of artists like Klee and Seurat. The two artists began a romantic

relationship later on, spending the summer of 1960 painting together in Italy. Their relationship ended that autumn, leading Riley to suffer a personal and artistic crisis. Thankfully, she was able to create paintings that would lead to Op Art works such as 'Kiss' (1961). She began to develop her signature Op Art style, using black-and-white geometric patterns to explore the dynamism of sight and produce a disorienting effect on the eye, alongside movement and colour. Riley and de Saumarez maintained a professional friendship until the latter's death in 1969, and Riley has often cited his role as an early mentor.

From 1957 to 1958, Riley worked as an art teacher at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Harrow, London, and began a basic design course there too. She later worked at the Loughborough School of Art, the Hornsey College of Art and the Croydon College of Art. Later on, Riley, with her partner Peter Sedgley, visited the Vaucluse Plateau in south-eastern France, where she acquired a derelict farm that would become a studio for her work. Meanwhile in England, Victor Musgrave at Gallery One held Riley's first solo exhibition in the spring of 1962.

Learning from Georges Seurat

Riley's mature style, developed in the 1960s, was influenced by sources such as the French Neo-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat. She saw his painting titled 'The Bridge At Courbevoie' ('Bridge') at the Courtald Gallery in 1959 and later painted a copy from a book illustration at an expanded scale to decipher how his pointillist technique used complimentary colours. She later went on to create her own pointillist landscapes, including 'Pink Landscape', painted in 1960, which portrays the "sun-filled hills of Tuscany". Riley's copy of 'Bridge' has been hung in her studio ever since, barring its loan to the Courtald for the 2015-16 exhibition 'Bridget Riley: Learning from Seurat'. In art critic Jonathan Jones' opinion, this demonstrates "how crucial" Seurat was in her approach to art. Jones writes that she, like Seurat, practised art as an "optical science"

and shares his "joy for life", a simple but radical delight in colour and seeing. In his view, Riley "really did forge her optical style by studying Seurat", making the Courtald exhibition a meeting of old and new.

Riley's Style Over Time

Bridget Riley was first known for her black-and-white works, presenting a great variety of geometric forms that produce sensations of movement and colour. These paintings were said to induce a variety of sensations in viewers, such as seasickness or even the feeling of skydiving. Visually, the works related to some concerns of the period, such as perceived need for audience participation, challenges to the notion of mind-body duality (which led Aldous Huxley to experiment with hallucinogenic drugs) and tensions surrounding whether a scientific future would bring benefits or nuclear war.

When creating a painting, Riley first meticulously plans the design of her composition with preparatory drawings and collage techniques, and then her assistants paint the final canvas with great precision under her instruction.

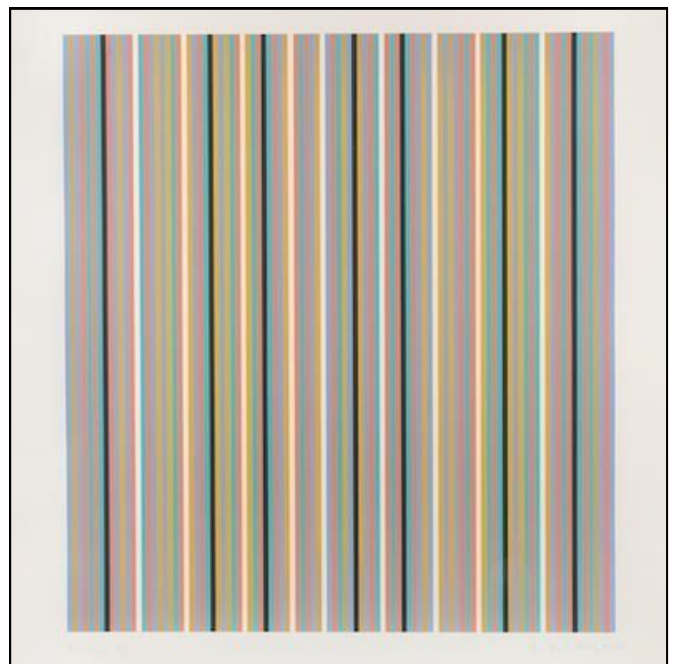
Riley began investigating colour in 1967, when she produced her first stripe paintings. After a major early 1970s retrospective, she began to travel extensively. On a trip to Egypt in the 1980s, she felt inspired by colourful hieroglyphic decoration and went on to explore colour and contrast. The visit also inspired her 'Egyptian Palette' and the 'Ka' and 'Ra' series of paintings. These captured the spirit of the country, ancient and modern, and reflected the colours of the landscape. Invoking the sensorial memory of her travels, Riley's works from 1980 to 1985 exhibit her free reconstruction of restricted chromatic palettes discovered abroad. Towards the end of the 1980s, her style changed dramatically, with the reintroduction of a diagonal plane in the form of a sequence of parallelograms used to distrust and animate the stripes of her previous paintings.



'CATARACT 1' BY BRIDGET RILEY

Exhibitions and Recognition

Riley exhibited in a 1965 show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York titled 'The Responsive Eye', created by curator William C. Seitz. This introduced the world's attention to the Op Art movement, including her work. Her 1964 painting 'Current' was reproduced on the show's catalogue. Riley later represented Britain at the 1968 Venice Biennale and became the first British Contemporary painter, and the first woman, to be awarded the International Prize for painting. Among her other recognitions are Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (1974), Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour (1998) and the Praemium Imperiale (2003).



'SILVERED 2' EDITION 75 BY BRIDGET RILEY

My Opinion

Overall, I was interested in the artist's unique use of colour, shape and tone. There were some specific paintings that I liked, including 'Silvered Painting', which dazzled the eye with contrasting stripes of colour, 'Current: Dark Colours', which used shape to make it appear as if there were waves on the canvas, and 'Cataract 1' which cleverly made the central stripe stand out from the others around it using contrast.

Bridget Riley is an artist with a visually stunning portfolio of works, and has inspired me greatly. I hope that you can also find enjoyment in her paintings.

THE MARK OF MURDER

Written by Holly D in Year 11, this thrilling murder mystery will keep readers guessing all year long in the 2025–2026 editions of The Mark. Each issue reveals a brand-new perspective on the same shocking crime and with every twist, you'll get closer to uncovering the real killer.

LEAH



Triston was curled up on the sofa. Audrey had draped a blanket over his body while Ezra made a cup of tea. I sat next to him, feeling like my whole world was crumbling down. I'd known that Triston was involved with the wrong people. He had told me in a panic a week ago, and I still couldn't get his terrified face out of my mind. But neither could I get Alan out of it.

We all felt a little lost without Emily to guide us. I hadn't realised how much we relied on her until she had left.

"Why are we here?" I had to ask, breaking the silence that had engulfed us.

"To wait for Emily to get back?" Ezra sounded confused.

"No, I mean, why did Alan decide to bring us all here?"

I was never fond of Alan, and the feeling was definitely mutual. So it seemed out of place that he should invite me on a holiday. He was the type to purposely leave you out if he didn't like you, even if you were friends with everyone else in the friendship group. I had accepted this invitation because all my other friends were going.

No, I had accepted to make sure Triston was okay. That Alan wouldn't hurt his brother anymore.

"How did he even afford this?" Audrey questioned.

Triston groaned and curled in on himself even more. "He's been pocketing some money from the drugs."

"And no one noticed?" Ezra said, handing Triston his tea.

"No, they did. But Al... Alan... just blamed me instead. Alan is... was always good at making people believe. He was always an amazing liar."

I sat up straighter, feeling my heart race in my chest. I hadn't heard about this. He was in deeper danger than I'd thought. Ezra swore and seemed to focus on my painting rather than looking at anyone else.

We all sat in silence for a while, digesting the horrid information our friend had just given us.

"Hey, Audrey?" Triston whispered. "I hope you don't think that we love you any less just because you're dating Emily. I know my brother would, but I need you to know that you're our friend, no matter what."

He looked away guiltily after he said that, and I felt my heart twist. He must be feeling some responsibility.

"He told us that it was wrong. That we were wrong." Audrey's eyes were glazed with tears. "He caught us together and threatened to tell everyone... and Emily wasn't ready for that."

"He was blackmailing you."

I'm not sure who said it, but the horror behind the words was shared by all of us.

"It's never wrong to love someone," Ezra murmured. "Ever."

"Alan thought it was."

"Alan was wrong."

I wrapped her in a hug that she quickly returned.

"I've got your back," I promised quietly. "I've always got your back."

When we pulled away, she met my eyes with silent gratitude, but behind it all there was fear.

"I've got your back, no matter what, Audrey."

My eyes drifted to my art, and the stab of anger that usually accompanied it was gone. Now, all it was was a painting. The raven seemed less intimidating, and the dove looked sturdier and stronger. I got up, feeling the need to add the last strokes to finish it, but when I sat down, something didn't feel right. My heart thudded.

Something's wrong. My art supplies were all still here. My paint brushes...

My paint thinner wasn't that empty. I had brought a new bottle just for this trip.

"Oh."

It was too little a word for the fear I felt. I had to get to Alan's room. Now. I thundered up the stairs, not caring if anyone was following. I threw open his door and desperately looked around. What for?

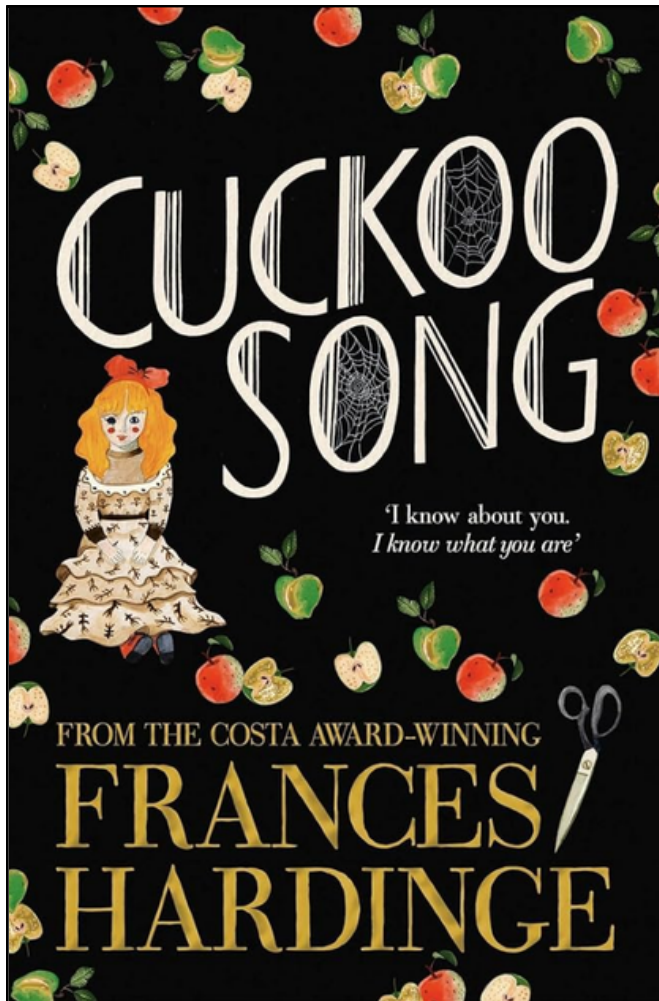
His room was a mess, with bedding thrown on the floor and clothes scattered across the room.

"What's wrong?" Audrey gasped from behind me.

"I think..." I swallowed hard. "I think Alan was poisoned."

REVIEW OF “CUCKOO SONG” BY FRANCES HARDINGE

Step into the magical and mysterious world of Cuckoo Song as one reader explores its gothic atmosphere, unforgettable characters, and surprising twists. In this thoughtful book review, our Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Napier, shares why Frances Hardinge's novel is a must read for fans of fantasy and fairy tales.



I love reading young adult fiction and often borrow books from the RMGS library. Recently, I read Cuckoo Song by Frances Hardinge. I was drawn to the book because I had previously read and enjoyed The Lie Tree by the same author, and this novel promised to be just as magical. It is a book that I would categorise as magical realism because, although it is set against the realistic backdrop of the period after the Second World War and is essentially about sisters, it contains magical and supernatural elements that will entertain fans of gothic, supernatural, and fantasy fiction.

The story begins with a girl waking up in her bed and not feeling quite herself. Strange things start happening around her as she soon realises that she is not actually who she thinks she is. It soon becomes apparent that she does not get along with her sister and that their relationship is turbulent. This tension is heightened when we realise that her sister knows she is not who everyone thinks she is, and that she is actually a "cuckoo" changeling in place of the real sister.

The story explores the strained relationship between the sisters while also examining how far someone might go to hurt, but also protect, those they love. It is a story full of gothic elements, fairy tale like characters, and dark, sinister ideas and scenes. It might also be viewed as a coming of age story, as both sisters embark on an adventure and learn more about each other and themselves.

I loved the book because I never knew what was going to happen next. I could not predict any of the many twists, and I enjoyed the way the magical elements stretched reality while still remaining believable. The female characters were also strong and easy to relate to, as they shared their darkest thoughts of jealousy, pain, and love. I have a little sister whom I have both fiercely loved and "hated" at different times, and I am always drawn to stories that feature sisters. I am also attracted to stories in which girls and women challenge stereotypes.

Finally, I love a gripping read with plenty of action, memorable characters, and strong dialogue. This story provided all of that and more. I would recommend it to any fan of a good old fashioned dark and twisted fairy tale.

A SHORT GUIDE TO ART DECO

Explore the elegance and innovation of the Art Deco movement, from its origins in early twentieth century Europe to the artists and designers who shaped its distinctive style. In this informative article, Daniel K examines the history, characteristics, and lasting influence of one of the world's most recognisable design movements.

Art Deco is a fascinating design movement that was most prominent in the 1920s and 1930s. It captured the essence of the exotic combined with streamlined simplicity. In this article, I will explain its unique characteristics, where it came from, and some of the people who defined it.

Origins

The style first appeared at the 1910 Bruxelles Exhibition Universelle. Here, Munich based designers such as Professor Albin Müller presented simple, geometrically ordered room designs that showed the influence of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Many saw this new, unnamed style as a progression from the outdated Art Nouveau. Later that year, at the Paris Salon d'Automne, more Munich decorators exhibited works that were

criticised but still proved popular with audiences.

French designers were determined to remain leaders of taste, as they had been since the eighteenth century. This led to the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs, although it was delayed until 1925 because of the First World War and its aftermath. This exhibition gave Art Deco its name.

Characteristics

Unlike many other styles, where architecture took the limelight, interior design was the main focus of Art Deco. The style was characterised by classical inspiration, repeated geometric motifs inspired by Cubist paintings, a love of exotic and luxurious materials, and the use of smooth surfaces to envelop three dimensional forms.

The classicised forms of fine eighteenth and nineteenth century furniture were used as models to remove the excesses of Art Nouveau from design. Art Deco designers were also inspired by non European art, helping to create the style's distinctive exotic ambience.

Influential People

One of the most influential Art Deco designers was Emile Jacques Ruhlmann (1879 to 1933), the acknowledged leader of French interior and furniture design from 1918 to 1925. He worked within the conventions of eighteenth century French tradition, using elements such as tapered, fluted legs and drum shaped tables. The lines of his furniture were frequently highlighted with ivory inlay. As he created designs exclusively for wealthy clients, Ruhlmann used only the rarest materials, including lizard skin, sharkskin, tortoiseshell, and exotic hardwoods.





Another important Art Deco figure was the Polish born artist Tamara de Lempicka. After escaping Russia with her husband during the Russian Revolution in 1917, she settled in Paris and refined her style into one that was distinctive and eye catching. Her extraordinary ability to create glamorous depictions of prominent figures propelled her to a high status within the Parisian Art Deco movement.

Lempicka's paintings are a direct reflection of the flamboyant lifestyles of Parisian bohemian socialites of the time, and her use of vivid colours helped set her work apart from that of many other artists. Her most famous piece was Autoportrait (Self Portrait in a Green Bugatti), commissioned for the cover of the German fashion magazine 'Die Dame' to celebrate the independence of women.

American architectural sculptor Lee Lawrie was best known for creating 'Atlas' at Rockefeller Center in New York. The sculpture depicts a fifteen foot human figure supporting an armillary sphere. At its unveiling in 1937, some critics were reminded of the imagery associated with Italian

dictator Benito Mussolini. In addition to 'Atlas', Lawrie received numerous sculpture commissions, producing Modern Gothic and Classical works before eventually embracing Art Deco later in his career.

I believe that Art Deco remains an influential design style, showcasing both the exotic and the classical while removing unnecessary excess. The works associated with the movement inspire awe and reflect the values and interests of the era in which they were created. Furthermore, many of its core principles have continued to influence later artistic and design movements.

WRITTEN BY DANIEL K



‘ICH BIN MEIN HIMMEL UND MEINE HÖLLE’ - A REVIEW OF THE LANDESTHEATER SALZBURG’S PRODUCTION OF DIE RÄUBER BY FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

Step into the world of German language theatre as one student explores a bold and inventive production of Friedrich Schiller’s ‘Die Räuber’. In this insightful review, Lizzy K in Year 13 examines the performances, music, and dramatic changes that make this adaptation so memorable.

My relationship with the German language is deeply connected to its arts and culture. In fact, it was a clip from a piece of theatre that led me to take the language for A Level, and I have learned a great deal of German through soundtracks from musicals such as ‘Elisabeth and Tanz der Vampire’. However, for obvious reasons, theatre in the German language is not very accessible to me, and I often have to make do with whatever clips a production decides to post online. It was therefore a pleasant surprise when I discovered that the Landestheater Salzburg has a selection of shows that can be watched online for free, and one of my favourite plays, ‘Die Räuber’ (The Robbers) by Friedrich Schiller, was among them.

‘Die Räuber’ is a play about two brothers: the beloved and charismatic Karl (Skye MacDonald) and the bitter and neglected Franz (Gregor Schulz). Wanting Karl’s inheritance, Franz tricks their father, Maximilian (Matthias Hermann), into disowning him. Meanwhile, Karl becomes the leader of a band of robbers. Back at home, Karl’s fiancée, Amalia (Nikola Jaritz Rudle), fends off Franz’s relentless attempts to court and control her.

The cast of this production were all exceptionally strong, and I loved the new directions in which their characters were taken. A moment of violence from Maximilian, for example, turned the portrayal of Franz as

perpetrator and his father as victim on its head, raising questions about the origins of Franz’s behaviour. MacDonald led his band of robbers with the charisma befitting the character and succeeded in making me root for someone whom I had found rather flat when reading the play. Tina Eberhardt was equally captivating as Karl’s jealous second in command, Spiegelberg, and I found that the gender blind casting of the role brought a refreshing new dimension to the character.

My favourite performance overall was probably that of Jaritz Rudle as Amalia. This fiery young woman has always been one of my favourite characters in the play, and I saw everything I had hoped for and more in this interpretation. I particularly appreciated that this version of Amalia is allowed to desire love from people other than Karl, rather than simply waiting chastely for his return, as she often does in other productions. I also admired her display of autonomy in the first scene of Act Three.

The show is accompanied by songs performed by Peter Baxrainer on the electric guitar and sung mostly by the cast. Particular favourites of mine were the robbers’ rendition of ‘I Predict a Riot’ by the Kaiser Chiefs, Amalia and Karl’s rendition of ‘Happy Together’ by The Turtles, and Franz’s version of ‘Boys Don’t Cry’ by The Cure. This final song was especially interesting from a characterisation perspective. Franz appears



to have internalised a great deal of toxic masculinity, and I appreciated the choice of song as a means of exploring this aspect of his character.

It is impossible to discuss this production without mentioning the rewritten ending. In the original version, the robbers storm and burn the castle, causing Franz to panic and take his own life. In this production, Karl is the only one to enter. Although he wishes to avenge himself by killing his younger brother, he hesitates, though Franz eventually takes his own life regardless. This alteration also gives the audience time to see the brothers interact, whereas they are rarely seen together in the same scene.



Likewise, Amalia's fate is dramatically changed. Rather than being shot by Karl after delivering a tearful monologue about her inability to live without him, she instead delivers a heartfelt, newly written soliloquy about humanity's need for community before disappearing to an unknown destination, hopefully to enjoy the happier life she deserves. However, the play still seems to demand a sacrifice. In Amalia's place, Karl shoots his own father after hearing the voices of the other robbers in his head. He is left alone on stage, and the audience is left to wonder: is the cycle of violence over, or has it not yet been satisfied?

All in all, I would recommend this production to anyone with sufficient German to understand it, as there are no English subtitles available. However, free English translations of the script can be found online, which would provide an understanding of the action up until the altered ending. It is an excellent introduction to the world of German language theatre for anyone who is interested. If it is not to your taste, the Landestheater Salzburg also offers six other productions that can be streamed online.

WRITTEN BY LIZZY K



RAINHAM MARK GRAMMAR SCHOOL

WE WANT TO CELEBRATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS!

ABOVE AND BEYOND OUR SCHOOL CO-CURRICULUM

We know our students achieve amazing things in sport and activities outside of school – and we want to **celebrate them!**

WHETHER YOU ARE REPRESENTING AT A LOCAL, DISTRICT, COUNTY REGIONAL OR NATIONAL LEVEL – PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED!

IN ANY SPORT OR ACTIVITY
e.g. football, rugby, Irish Dance, karting – **ANYTHING!**

PLEASE SEND DETAILS OF YOUR **SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS** TO MR C O'NEILL, HEAD OF PE VIA EMAIL:

coneill@rmet.org

YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS. YOUR SCHOOL. YOUR PRIDE. LET'S CELEBRATE THEM TOGETHER!

LOCAL | DISTRICT | COUNTY | REGIONAL | NATIONAL

WBD STORY COMPETITION

Two powerful stories celebrating the enjoyment of reading, Logan C (Year 11) and Ethan A (Year 8) captivated the judges and were crowned winners of the 2026 World Book Day Story Competition.

'TICK'

TICK

I winced at the ring of the tarnished clock imposing over the discoloured pages of my novel. It hung on a string, waiting until the second it surreptitiously frays into pieces, initiating a disorder of normality in my room. I was lost in a familiar trance to an addictive book, flipping each page, desperate to read as much as my mind would process.

I was lost in the soothing, snugly duvet of my bed, relaxing as my mind absorbed the sentences reflecting off the page. My window was shrouded by thick, grey curtains, yet slivers of moonlight squeezed through the cracks that the curtains were unable to cover, coating the bed in strokes of tranquility.

TICK

I deviated from my book to glance at the clock, squinting as my dainty glasses slipped down the bridge of my nose, perusing the arrangement of roman numerals organised along the clock.

2:37am.

I sighed, attempting to settle the novel down, however my vision darted back towards the words causing my sleepless nights. The thought of work glided through my brain, the thought of my office job or stacking papers repeatedly until each joint of my fingers plummeted off or stalking past my cold coworkers. Or maybe it was just the thought of waking up at 6:00 a.m.

If I continued reading then, I knew I was never going to be able to rise in the few hours ahead. But somehow, I couldn't stop

The colossal weight of exhaustion began to toll on me as my weary eyes started to flutter shut, the brinks of my eyelashes brushing calming patterns along my cheeks. Although, before I could submit to the land of rest, a feeling of premonition washed over my limbs, jolting my eyelids up.

Silence greeted me, as I heaved my eyes ajar, my vision automatically landed on the grimy clock. It was still 2:37am. The second hand hadn't moved an inch.

I thought my mind was pulling tricks on me. It wouldn't surprise me at that point, and that was my indicator to finally settle down my reeling contemplations and fall into a slumber on my pillow.

Yet, my eyes were hauled over to the endless words stuffed into compacted sentences on hundreds of pages. Before I could even register the permanent tale, the deceptive words began to peel off the page like cheap, childrens stickers sailing into the humid atmosphere of my room. It was as if a flimsy craft was drifting down a rushing stream, reaching the end of the river and descending into a vigorous waterfall. Though before it could strike the impending ground, the stubborn words bloomed into bewitching peonies and bluebells, draping over the unyielding bed like a makeshift canopy. Twisting, emerald vines stretching for every corner of the paralysed room illustrating deep shadows across the swaying curtains.

The square box walls I had grown accustomed to, toppled over into the enigma of the unknown, divulging towering, prodigious mountains. I immediately shot up,

astonished by saplings thrusting through soil, flourishing into gargantuan trees.

Adventurous vines explored from the branches, and clusters of leaves, drifted through a faint breeze, allowing one to topple graciously onto the tip of my nose.

A puissant gust of wind struck me backwards, forcing me down, prohibiting me from rising. The duvet soared over my chest, enfolding me into immediate warmth and a sense of comfort. The novel's pages began to flick rapidly back and forth, landing on a blank, empty page, the words long gone into the code of mother nature.

TICK

Suddenly, the book blew into my pallid face, catching me off guard and abandoning me speechless. I instantly yanked the novel away, landing softly on the floor, startling me as I came to the realisation that the enchanting mountains and nature had vanished. The gardens of flowers had disappeared, replaced by the imposing wall clock, which ticked, ticked, ticked to the rhythm of time.

2:37am.

WRITTEN BY LOGAN C

'TO READ IS TO LEARN'

"No!"

"I don't want to!"

"You can't force me!"

Those were the shouts that erupted from Claudia and Terry. Their parents wanted them to read a chapter of a book without success. The two loathed reading, spending their free time doing anything but reading.

"Just this book? Please?" their mother asked.

Suddenly, after a long time, Terry was fed up with the incessant bother.

"OK." he sighed. "I'll read it, Mum."

Their mother stifled a laugh. "And you, Claudia?" she asked.

"Yes, Mum."

The siblings' parents exchanged hopeful glances.

They flicked to the start of the book. It was a tale where a knight went on a quest, slew a dragon, and became king. The chapter had terms like, 'the dragon encircled the castle

castle like a swarm of wasps' and, 'the mammoth, metropolitan, magical kingdom' which were hard for the two to understand, so their parents explained. What they'd just seen inside was quite disappointing.

"I promise you," their father exclaimed, "this book will benefit you in at least three ways." Eventually, both children were off to a good night's sleep.

The next day, Claudia's alarm woke her up, and she nudged Terry to wake him up.

"Oh!" he yawned. "That was the best sleep I've had in a long time! It was lovely!"

"Funny. Dad did mention that reading can help you sleep better..." Claudia mused. "We don't know for sure, though." Terry was sceptical.

"You're right. Let's get ready for school."

At school, Freddie was waiting for them.

Freddie was a humorous, relaxed person who was friends with Terry and Claudia. Today, he looked downhearted.

“What happened?” Claudia said to him.

“My sister recently went to university, and she’s enjoying herself but I’m starting to miss her.”

“That’s OK, Freddie.” Terry comforted him.

“She’ll come back soon, and you can still call her!” Claudia added. “I’d feel sad if I were you too.”

“Thank you so much! I’m feeling a bit better now. Bye!” Freddie said.

“Bye!” they responded. As they walked off, Terry thought about the situation. “What did you say, just then?”

“I’d feel sad if I were you too?” Claudia looked puzzled.

“Remember when Mum said, ‘reading makes you more empathetic.’ Hmm...”

They arrived at English, where their teacher handed them a test. After it had finished, they swapped the tests to mark.

“What does ‘mammoth’ mean, as an adjective?” Mr White, their teacher, called. “It means ‘large’.” Claudia replied, recalling it appearing in the book.

He smiled. “Thank you, and what does ‘encircle’ mean?”

Terry grinned. “It means to go around something in a circular motion.” He was impressed. “We’ve finished, please swap back.”

Mr White eyed the 100% mark on the siblings’ papers. “Those who got 100% probably have lots of knowledge from the books they read! Congratulations!”

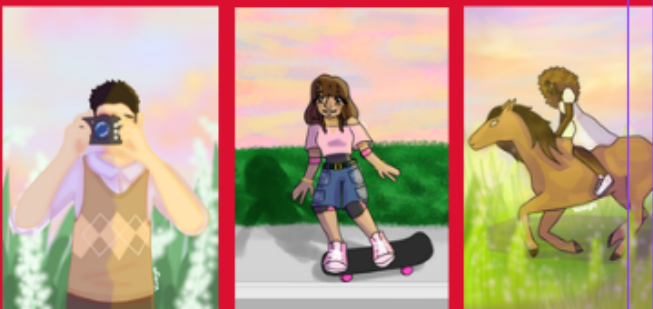
The two laughed. Their dad was right.

From then on, Claudia and Terry loved reading. They chose to read books in free time.

Because to read is to learn...

...and to learn, is to read.

WRITTEN BY ETHAN A



ARTISTS WANTED!

the Mark

RE-MARK-ABLE READS

Welcome to Remarkable Reads, the section that celebrates the boundless imagination and talent of our student writers! This space is dedicated to showcasing the creative works of RMGS pupils, from captivating short stories to evocative poetry.

THEY TELL ME

Through vivid imagery and reflective questioning, this thoughtful poem explores the challenges of change, uncertainty, and self discovery. Written by Sky-R A, 'They Tell Me' captures the struggle between expectation and personal growth in a powerful and relatable way.

Change is difficult and happens over time.
In a world where we are constantly saying constant is a crime,
They tell me it is easy, just do it fast.
But I do not know who to believe in the past.

Change requires thoughts, ones that are great.
They tell me to hurry before it is too late.
I do not know if I can change; it seems much too hard.
No matter what, I cannot seem to draw the right card.

Change to some is natural; to others it brings fear.
Why can we stay the same and things just work out here?
"Please let me change," they tell me. "I'm going to fail."
Or I could sail by boat if I can work the sail.

They tell me to change, but the truth is I do not know if I can.
If I were a leader, changing, I would be.

WRITTEN BY SKY-R A

**WRITERS
WANTED!
WEDNESDAY
LUNCH IN L6**

**CONTACT MRS STARR WITH ANY
ENQUIRIES AT
LSTARR@RMET.ORG**



THE MISSING CHILD

Blending mystery, emotion, and a powerful sense of uncertainty, The Missing Child explores questions of identity, family, and belonging. Written by Sky-R A, this compelling poem takes readers on a thought provoking journey from an ordinary day to a startling discovery.

My dad picked us up from school,
Like always before the weekend.
He was average, not overly cool,
The type you would not hesitate to befriend.

I went to the shop during my stay,
Caught in the wind, a poster asked me to fly.
Landing on the floor, trying to get away,
"Want to see me?" asking how and why.

A missing child's poster, easily overlooked.
The photo, to my heart, dug its way.
Yet the poster on the page is what left me shook.
I made my way home without looking back, with nothing to say.

For it was my name, my face, my identity,
But I had not been abducted, not that I knew.
Or maybe I was, and it was unknown to me.
If my father lost the court case, we would be through.

A lie to see your child grow,
Seeing a way is what he feels, sweet.



ARTISTS WANTED! WEDNESDAY LUNCH IN L6

WE ARE LOOKING FOR ARTISTS TO
CREATE:

COMIC BOOK STRIPS
COVER IMAGES
LANDSCAPES
IMAGES OF THE SCHOOL
IMAGES OF SCHOOL LIFE

CONTACT MRS STARR WITH ANY
ENQUIRIES AT [LSTARR@RMF.ORG](mailto:lstarr@rmf.org)

THE LIFE OF A TEENAGER

Exploring themes of isolation, technology, and modern teenage life, this thought provoking poem reflects on the comforts and challenges of retreating from the world. Written by Sky-R A, it offers an honest and insightful perspective on the experiences of many young people today.

In my room, I do not need to worry about outside.
I stay in my room.
In my room, I can actually express myself.
I stay in my room.
In my room, I can escape from judgement.
I stay in my room.

On my phone, I am distracted from the worries outside.
On my phone.
On my phone, I can find answers quicker.
I stay on my phone.
On my phone, I see the highs of the world safely.
I stay on my phone.

Asleep in my bed, I do not have to acknowledge reality.
I do not leave my bed.
Asleep in my bed, I cannot be disappointed.
I do not wake up.
Asleep in my bed, my dreams keep me satisfied.
I do not wake up.

These issues are described as problems.
The people do not listen, blinded by the town.
These issues are described by how it is.
The people do not listen, more while control.
These issues are underlying habits we need to fix.
The people do not listen, because that means fixing themselves.

WRITTEN BY SKY-R A

TUNNEL

Journey into a dark and claustrophobic world of endless digging, fading hope, and uncertain escape in this powerful poem about perseverance and despair. Written by Dylan S, this haunting piece explores the physical and emotional struggles of those trapped deep beneath the ground.

Night at one. Night hours later.
Dig and dig and dig all night.
You long to leave,
But Richard is tunnelling, so, so must you

Night at two, night hours later,
Tunnelling, tunnelling, wishing for light,
You long to breathe,
But John is tunnelling, so, so must you

Night at three, night hours later,
Excavating, just excavate, use all your might
You long to believe -
That there will be a way out - but Mark isn't hoping so
nor must you

Night at four, night hours later
Mining, still mining, no end in sight,
You long to conceive -
That there is a life outside the tunnel, but
Jane isn't thinking, so nor must you

Night at five, night hours later
Is that a collapse you hear - all is not alright,
You know your doomed, you begin to grieve,
Everybody knows there is no way to leave,

Night at five, night hours later
Candles are extinguished, they are burning through your time,
You're desperately close to humans, perhaps a fifty - metre climb,
But nobody can hear you in your deep and dark hole
So you keep digging, just dig like a mole

Force the tunnelling shield forward, inch by inch
Onto the last morsels of hope you must clinch

Night at five, night hours later
The clay that you face collapses before your eyes
The other end of the tunnel that you have met is brightly gleaming,
You are free, you can leave but you're still trapped,
because you were only dreaming.

WRITTEN BY DYLAN S

TRUE ADVENTURE



Rainham Mark Grammar School

Borneo Expedition July 2028 Launching in September!



WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR TALENTED:

ARTISTS

JOURNALISTS

FICTION WRITERS

POETS

CRITICS

COLUMNISTS

PHOTOGRAPHERS

FROM ALL YEAR GROUPS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE
JOIN US IN L6 DURING
WEDNESDAY LUNCH.