



InTouch

Newsletter 3 / 17th December 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

My thanks for your continued support in engaging with Kingsdown School for the full benefit of your son/daughter. Since September, this is and has been truly appreciated.

Looking back on a busy and successful term, I recognise how much has gone on, how much has been achieved and how much students and staff are looking forward to a well earned rest over the Christmas period.

I would like to congratulate students on their progress and positive start to the school year, especially our newer students to the school in Year 7 - they have truly found their feet and settled into life at Kingsdown extremely well. They continue to hold the highest record of attendance and achievement points. I would also like to congratulate our Year 11 students who completed three very challenging weeks of Mock Examinations. In the vast majority of cases it was clear to see that our GCSE students had prepared thoroughly. All students have responded to well to the feedback given by their teachers.

As a school, and after detailed research, we have invested heavily in several online learning packages and I would like to thank all parents who have actively supported their sons/daughters in reviewing Show My Homework as well as the various other packages such as GCSEpod, Tassomai and Hegarty Maths. These are all highly supportive measures to support revision and exam preparation.

The new year will provide us all with the opportunity to further embed our expectations, I am certain that students and staff will achieve even more extraordinary things next year. Everyone at Kingsdown remains committed to working hard to secure and achieve our vision of becoming a "school of excellence, bursting with pride and ambition".

We will be celebrating Christmas through our end of term assemblies and I look forward to hearing about the many positive achievements of year, tutor group and individual students.

Our students return to Kingsdown at 8.30am on Tuesday 8th January. I know that I can count on your support in ensuring that your child is in uniform as per our policy - [Uniform](#), is fully equipped and attends each and every day. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your son/daughter's tutor or Progress Leader. As you know, all addresses are available from our website.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents who supported the numerous events that have taken place since September. These events have included, parent information evenings, parent subject evenings as well as many extra curricular and sporting events. Your time here is appreciated.

I wish our students, our parents and carers, staff and governors a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

Mrs Leigh-Bennett
Headteacher



KEY EVENTS FOR TERM 2

Date	Event
7th January	TD Day
8th January	Students return to school at 8.30am
15th January	Year 10 Parents' Evening
17th January	Science Information Evening
31st January	Year 8 Parents' Evening
8th February	Elevate Parents Session
18th - 22nd February	Half Term

NON-UNIFORM DAY

Thank you to everyone who supported the non-uniform day on the 7th December, the total amount raised was £1,089.85 which is a fantastic amount.

FAREWELL TO STAFF

We say goodbye to the following staff who are leaving us at the end of this term:

Mrs Norridge (Science Teacher)

Mrs Fisher (ASC TA)

Miss Shimwell (ESC)

Mrs Chick (DT Technician)

Mrs Yerbury-Hodgson

I would like to thank them for their work with students and their commitment to the school. We wish them all the very best for their future in their new schools and roles.

I look forward to introducing our new staff to you in January and know that the Kingsdown School community will make them feel very welcome.

Mrs Leigh-Bennett

YEAR 11 POST 16 APPLICATIONS

The window for **College and Sixth Form applications** is open now!

We are encouraging students to have applied for their post-16 destination by FEBRUARY HALF-TERM; this is to give them time to concentrate on their GCSEs, and also to give them a better chance of being able to study the courses they have chosen.

Sixth Form applications will need to be in earlier than College applications – please check the relevant Sixth Form websites for exact closing dates.

Some careers require particular qualifications – doing some research in to this may help inform post-16 course choices. If a student is not sure what they want to do, then taking a broad array of subjects that interest them may be the way forward.

Once they have applied, students will be asked to an interview – this is an informal discussion about the student; the course/s they have applied for, predicted grades and any support that may be needed. A parent/carer can attend with the student – or support from the school can be provided by speaking to Miss Humphries.

Apprenticeship applications will depend on the company; many will not advertise for August/September 2019 positions until next year, yet companies such as Honda will have started already. For more information, visit www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship to sign up for alerts and to search the area for suitable positions, and www.hondamanufacturing.co.uk/careers/apprenticeships for information on Honda's apprenticeship scheme.

Students can apply to as many Colleges, Sixth Forms or apprenticeship positions as they wish. However, students applying for Sixth Form or an apprenticeship are required to apply to College as a back-up.

For more information, advice and guidance, please contact Miss Humphries ihumphries@kingsdownschool.co.uk or take a look at the Kingsdown School Careers blog: kingsdowncareers.wordpress.com

RECITAL EVENING

On Wednesday 28th November, Kingsdown School Music Department hosted a Recital Evening where students of all ages, including myself, performed some of their favourite music. Throughout the evening, students sang and played different instruments including Piano, Guitar, Voice and even a Trumpet. There were solo and duet performances that all went very well.

Everyone introduced themselves before performing and told the audience what they would be playing and we all took a bow at the end. Mrs Leigh-Bennett congratulated everyone and awarded each student a bronze lion badge. Three students, Emily Phillips, Derry Gallagher and Madison Waters, received a gold lion badge because their performances were amazing. I feel that the Recital Evening was a great hit and I can't wait until the next one in the spring.

Amy Thomas (Year 10)

PARENT GOVERNOR

BE PART OF A NEW CHAPTER AT KINGSDOWN SCHOOL



As a parent or carer, you naturally take a keen interest in your child's education. Now here's your chance to have a say in key decisions at our school and to make a real contribution to the local community - by becoming a Parent Governor.

School Governors make important decisions with regards to the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school. Committees and Link Governors support and challenge the senior team on all aspects of school improvement and the student experience.

Governors are drawn from all walks of life, and no specialist knowledge is required, the key qualifications for anyone considering the role of governor is an interest in education and a commitment to Kingsdown. There is a broad range of support available to Governors, including newsletters and publications, termly briefing documents, websites, helplines and training, with some specifically tailored for new Governors. Our more experienced Governors are very willing to provide mentoring advice and information.

Governing bodies act corporately, meaning that they are collectively responsible for decisions. The emphasis is very much on collaboration with other Governors and the Headteacher plus our colleagues from The River Learning Trust. The amount of time devoted to governance varies, but an average might be one governing body meeting per term, plus one or two committee meetings, a link visit and some preparatory reading. All meetings are held in term time only.

Governors report that they derive a range of personal benefits from the work - indeed, many find the role enormously rewarding. These benefits include; the chance to acquire new skills and upgrade existing ones, undertake an exciting and challenging role, meet new people and work together towards a common goal.

Governors also report immense satisfaction that they can help make a real difference to children's lives.

If you feel you may be interested in becoming a Governor at Kingsdown School please contact the school via email to head@kingsdownschool.co.uk .

FANTASTIC FUTURES TRIP TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

On the first Thursday back after half-term, eleven Year 11 students from the Fantastic Futures programme embarked on a trip to the University of Gloucestershire. The aim of the day was to learn all about university, in the hope of raising the aspirations of the attendees and encourage them to think about higher education as a real possibility.

The day began with a presentation about life at university – the breadth of courses available (over 50,000 in the UK!), finance, why to consider higher education and what it can offer you. We then took a tour of the university – we were at the Oxstalls Gloucester campus – and got to see some of the state-of-the-art sporting facilities, the new business building (complete with mock court room) and some of the nursing facilities.



Back in the main room, students were then given the 'Paper Tower Challenge', where teams had to create a free-standing paper tower that generated the greatest profit possible. Charts were given out with monetary costs, and the tutors running the challenge were giving out resources (sticky tape and scissors) at a charge. One of the groups from Kingsdown won in under 5 seconds by folding one sheet of A4 paper in

half – minimal material spend, minimal time spent on construction and no additional resources!

We broke for lunch in the new business building atrium, before taking part in the last activity, which was the Student Life board game. Working in teams, students had to navigate their way around the board, collecting as many 'Life Points' as possible whilst keeping an eye on their finances.



We would like to thank Fantastic Futures and the staff at the University of Gloucestershire for running the day; the students left inspired by what they heard and saw.

Miss Humphries

ATTENDANCE

Making every day in school is important and this includes making sure that your child attends school every day.

The minimum requirement for children to be in school is 95%, this ensures that students are able to access all necessary learning so that they can be successful when they leave school. It also is an essential life skill as there are attendance and punctuality requirements for all work places in the world outside of school.

Winter is now upon us, it is important to make sure that your child arrives at school at 8.35am every morning. If it is icy, or wet, please set off earlier so that your child is not late for school.

Ms Magenty, Assistant Headteacher

PRIME THEATRE

Prime Theatre are searching for enthusiastic young people to take part in Swindon's Young Arts Showcase!

Prime Theatre are excited to be organising Swindon's 4th annual Young Arts Showcase, funded by Friends of Swindon Arts Centre, taking place on Sunday 27th January 2019. The Young Arts Showcase is designed to give young people an opportunity to showcase their talent at a professional venue – be that singing, painting, poetry, comedy, film, dance or something we've never seen before!



If you are aged 5-25 and have a skill or passion you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you. No prior performance experience is necessary, it's all about having a go.

For this year's showcase we are theming the evening around the colour RED. You are free to interpret and use this theme however you like, or you can ignore it entirely, it's up to you! Performances can last up to 5 minutes. If your work is an object (ie a painting) it will be exhibited for the duration of the evening.

Previous showcases have featured singers, poets, media make-up artists, sign language choirs, art exhibitions, dance and much more.

"It's brilliant this event is happening again. Last year was so fun to be a part of and I'm sure a whole new group of young people will really enjoy being involved this time round."

Daisy Jesson, previous participant.

If you are interested in taking part please contact either Helen Morley at youngdirector@primetheatre.co.uk or Ellis Evason at youngproducer@primetheatre.co.uk. You can also ring us on 01793 614864 for more details. For more information about Prime Theatre visit www.primetheatre.co.uk.

All applications should be submitted by 17th December 2018.

Helen Morley – Young Director - Prime Theatre

WORK EXPERIENCE

After careful consideration Kingsdown School will no longer be running a week of work experience for our Year 10 students.

The reasons for this are several and include:

- The Health & Safety limitations mean that employers are increasingly unable and reluctant to take on students
- The Health & Safety limitations mean that students can only complete so many tasks and this limits their experience, as well as
- The loss of valuable curriculum time - 25 hours of teaching and learning.

I trust that you understand the reasons here. I know many parents/carers might wish to set up their own experiences for their sons / daughters over the summer break.

Should you have any questions or need any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our Careers Advisor at ihumphries@kingsdownschool.co.uk

Mrs Leigh-Bennett

SAFETY OF STUDENTS

As the evenings are getting dark, we have received a number of concerned calls from members of the public relating to students who cycle to and from school. They have expressed concerns around visibility, riding two abreast down the centre of the road and students cutting in front of traffic without looking.

If your child cycles to and from school, we ask that you have a conversation with your son or daughter about being safe on the roads. We strongly urge all students to wear a helmet, something florescent and have working bike lights on the front and back of their bikes. It is a good idea to check brakes and the tread of tyres regularly. Finally, wearing head phones whilst riding a bike significantly hinders the rider's ability to hear traffic around them and creates an added level of distraction when cycling.

Please urge your son or daughter to refrain from listening to music when cycling and check that they know the highway code when on their bike. We have also run a number of sessions during tutor time that focus on road safety and cycling to school, please feel free to use these sessions as a discussion point with your child.

Ms Magenty, Assistant Headteacher

MESSAGE FROM HEAD GIRL

The last two terms.

What can I say, it's been a rollercoaster of emotions. From doing our Mock Exams and then getting our results back. It's been eventful. But overall a good start to this new academic year. Although I am sure we are all ready for the holidays.

The senior students have been behind the scenes organising various events for the year to come and we will be most excited to share them with everyone once the time is ready.

It has been a tough term for the Year 11's but we are all ready for the months ahead. Bring on GCSE's 2019.

To finish off with the term we had the Year 7 Disco which the senior students suggested a while back. The senior students and prefects helped run the night and we had a DJ booked. It was good to see the teachers with the best moves!

Neena Marjason, Head Girl

ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

Term 2 saw the launch of the revised rewards structure. As a school we feel very passionate about ensuring that the majority of our students that come to school each and everyday, work hard and are respectful to everybody- are rewarded. The Kingsdown beats are 6 key elements that are at the heart of what makes Kingsdown 'beat'. Pride and Ambition, Respect and Responsibility, Stretch and Challenge.

Students were recognised at the end of this term for demonstrating these beats, winning students were awarded the 'beats badge' to be worn on the lapel of their blazers. Lion badges of Pride were awarded to exceptional student who have demonstrated excellence across a number of the beats or gone above and beyond in an aspect of their school life- it makes us so proud when we award these honourable badges.

As we move into term 3, the next phase of our rewards strategy rolls out. Students will be nominated for the beats fortnightly - these will be presented in their assembly. We are really excited for this next phase and look forward to seeing our students wearing their badges with Pride.

Mrs Criddle, Assistant Headteacher



I continue to thank you for all of your support with helping to raise our expectations around the Kingsdown uniform. Our students look incredibly smart and are wearing their uniform with Pride each and everyday. Over the last few weeks of December we have seen a number of trainers start to creep back in, please can you ensure that your child is in the correct footwear that is in line with the school uniform policy. Should there be an issue with their school shoes, please bring a note to the student reception and we can loan them a pair of shoes for the day.

A small minority of our students have started to wear 'hoodies' under their blazers, should students feel cold, the uniform policy states that a plain navy V neck sweater can be worn under the blazer. Hoodies or other brightly coloured sports wear must not be brought to or worn at school. Below is an extract of the policy on the outerwear suitable at Kingsdown.

Please use the Christmas period to ensure that you child has the appropriate coat as the colder months draw in.

Please can you also ensure that students wear full length trousers as over this term trousers are becoming three quarter length.

Other Items	Acceptable	Not acceptable
Outdoor Coat	Sensible outdoor coat Dark coloured, plain	Hoodie style (full zip up or overhead) Sports jacket/tracksuit Sports stripes

Mrs Criddle, Assistant Headteacher

EXPECTATIONS

We are coming to the end of the first term with the revised isolation process, thank you for your support with this transition.

The impact that this has had on the behaviour of the students during lesson time has been remarkable. The number of students being isolated from their lessons has dropped by 50% therefore ensuring that lessons are proceeding without disruption and high quality learning is taking place. We continue to raise our bar of expectation as we truly believe that our students deserve the right to access high quality learning that proceeds without disruption.

If your child is isolated from their lesson, they will go over to the Annex where they will work in isolation for 5 periods. In that time, their teacher will make contact with home regarding the isolation and a restorative conversation between the teacher and the student will take place. This conversation is fundamental in ensuring that the relationship is repaired.

As we move into term 3, we will continue to champion each and everyone of our students and ensure that they are stretched and challenged along the way, we feel confident in our behaviour for learning policy in that it helps to build and develop good learning habits.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Mrs Criddle, Assistant Headteacher

Swindon Literature Festival 2018

12th - 16th November

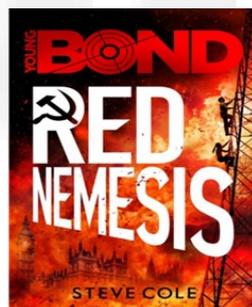
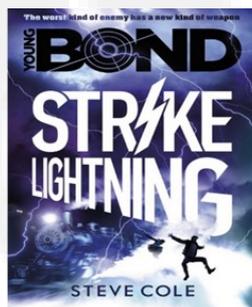
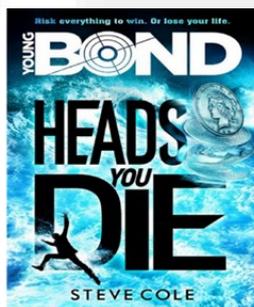
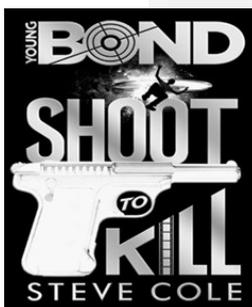


Wow! What an awe-inspiring and exhilarating event! Complete with internationally published authors from across the Country, who spoke of secret spies, dangerous worlds, adventures and the bizarre happenings of seemingly ordinary lives. The sheer magnitude of their larger-than-life ideas, combined with extraordinary enthusiastic energy, made for a truly unforgettable experience for all.

Steve Cole



On Monday, the comedy, fantasy and action adventure writer, Steve Cole, performed to Kingsdown's Year 7's. With relentless energy, he gripped attentions as he guided the audience through worlds of dinosaurs in space, secret agents and the very real technology of the 20th century that never quite caught on - like the family bicycle.



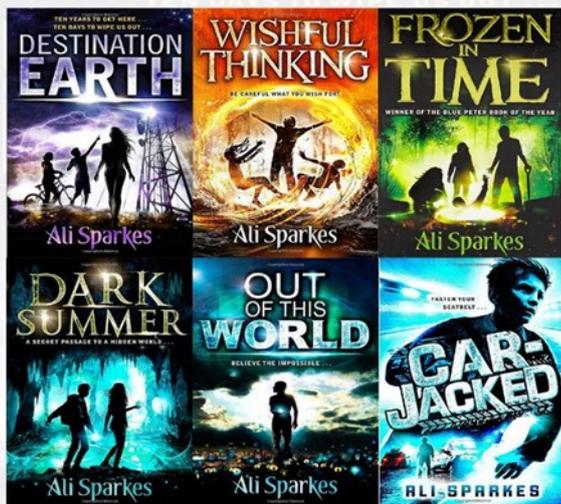
As well as performing for the Year 7's, Steve was kind enough to conduct a creative writing workshop on writing action scenes to a specially selected group of Year 8's. For almost an hour, Steve expanded on the students thoughts until their ideas were pumped full of adrenaline.



Ali Sparkes



Earworms stay in your head for hours - Who did let the dogs out?



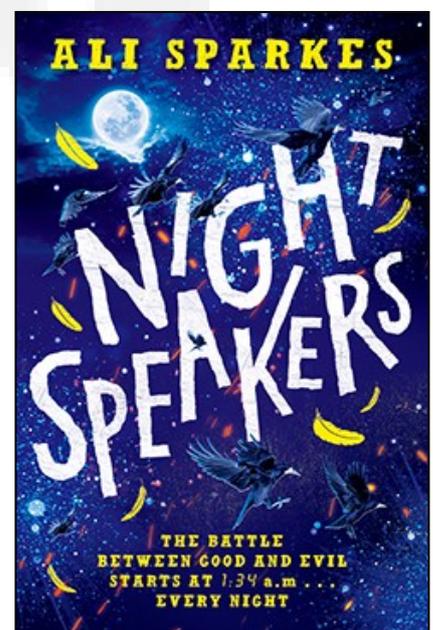
Kingsdown welcomed students from our partner primary schools to meet the author behind the fast-paced action stories, Ali Sparkes. Winner of the Blue Peter Book of the Year award in 2010, she entertained and captivated the audience with inspiring ideas, such as: the ability to communicate with animals and what it means to become hypnotised by earworms. Students also had an opportunity to get their books signed in person,

A well-deserved Wembley stadium welcome for Ali Sparkes. Her books include the Shapeshifter series, the Monster Makers series and her latest release - Night Speakers. Ali Sparkes will soon have 50 books published.

"She had the crowd engaged the while time"

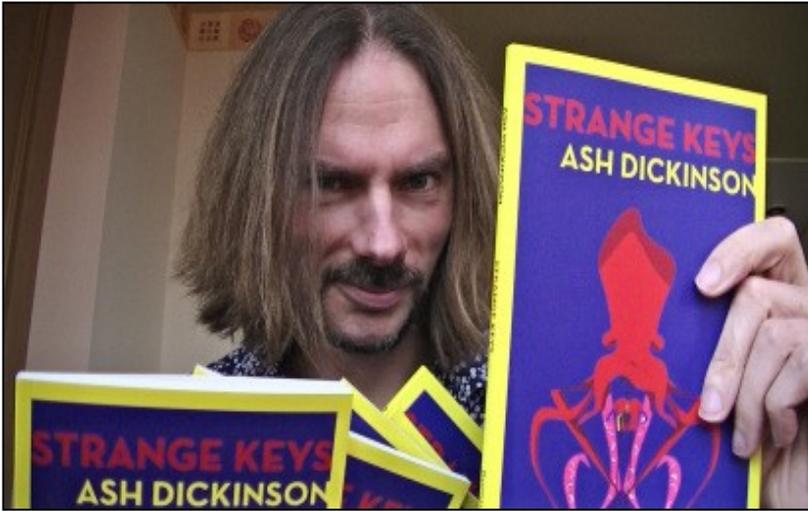
"Ali was inspirational and fun".

- Primary Teachers



NEWS FROM THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

Ash Dickinson



Ash Dickinson is a writer, poet and comedy performer. A multiple slam champion including Edinburgh and Cheltenham. Ash won the BBC Radio 4 Midlands Slam in 2009. In the previous BBC National Slam in 2007 he progressed through the Scottish heats, eventually finishing among the top 8 in the UK. Ash was runner-up in the 2011 UK All Stars Slam.

On Wednesday, Kingsdown had the privilege of witnessing the award winning wordsmith in action. Immediately, Ash won the crowd of Year 7's with humour and wit before he proceeded to crack open their minds, breaking the traditional stereotype of a poet with his lyrical and energetic poems.

Ash spoke about the popular game Fortnite - a short poem, playing on the words until he ends with "Can't eat. Fork, knife - too weak". He also mentioned Donald Trump and the idea of living in the Matrix.

It wasn't long before everyone was writing their own poems with the help of Ash's easily accessible activities. A few students even stood at the front and read their poems out to the rest of the year group.



Jonathan Meres



This year Jonathan Meres, best known for 'The World of Norm' series, came from Edinburgh to perform at The Wyvern Theatre. A lucky group of Year 7 and 8's went by coach to watch the antics and musical talents of the stand-up comedian and writer.



The award winning author doesn't take himself too seriously, saying "I'm just a bit, a tiny bit famous."

"Scottish Children's Book Award 2012"

"Phoenix Book Award 2013"

"Perrier Comedy Award" nominee 1993

"Time Out" Award winner 1989

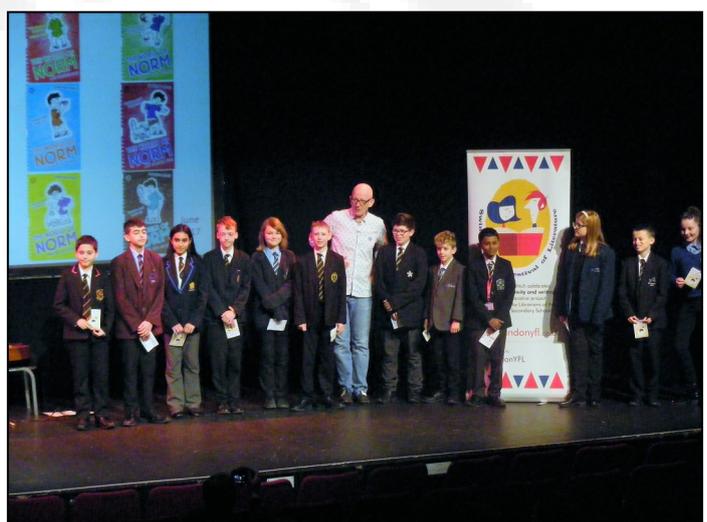
A student from each school was invited to the stage after receiving a 'golden norm' card. They were given a book token and had their photograph taken with Jonathan.

"The author was really funny and I had a really great time."

"I enjoyed the jokes and getting a signed book."

"There was lots of comedy - Jonathan Meres was so funny."

- The Students



NEWS FROM THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

Book Quiz

This year's book quiz was hosted by Swindon Academy, Joffre White was the amazing quiz master.

Topics included: characters from books, films based on books, WWI and authors through the time plus many more.

A group of 2 Year 7, 8 and 9's were chosen from each school to compete in the annual quiz.



Out of the 11 schools that participated - Kingsdown came a fantastic 5th place.

"We listened to each other's answers and had good teamwork."

"The teamwork was good and the food was nice."

"The book quiz was a great success and was really fun."

"We had a great time and it was a great environment."

Competition Winners

Year 7 and 9 students from Kingsdown did extremely well in both the illustration and poetry competition.

Out of the 11 schools that entered:

Lottie Bell came 3rd in the Year 7-8 category for her amazing art entry.

Jamelia Bramford came 1st in the Year 9-11 category.

Barbara Da Silva came 1st in the Year 9-11 category for her poetry.

They have been presented with the golden lion badge from Mrs Leigh-Bennett, and book vouchers at the celebration event from the Mayor of Swindon.

A huge congratulations to them.



'We champion each and every student'

Week beginning 3rd december**This weeks PE success and results**

Boys - Year 8s v Swindon Academy – Kingsdown Lost 30-2 but played really well. Man of the match was Harry Edwards.

Year 9s v Nova Hreed – Kingsdown won 16-12 a well fought game. Man of the match was Lucas White.

Girls - No fixtures for the girls this week but a successful one none the less. The previous week the girls played in a netball tournament, giving up their Sunday to represent Kingsdown School (Match report on the PE blog). Due to their success and determination Mrs Leigh–Bennett gave them the Kingsdown BEATS badge of Pride.

Sport student of the week: Aidan McGurk – Through to the England u15 Ice Hockey (his age group) trials 3rd selection on 20th December and also a second trial for u16s (the age group above) Team GB in Feb. More info on PE blog.

**Week beginning 10th December****This weeks PE success and results**

Year 7 5-a-side football tournament - The boys managed a 2nd place finish in this tournament, against some very good teams. They made it through to the last 6 in Swindon but were thwarted by some decent teams. This meant they unfortunately did not make it through to the finals in Torquay. A great effort none the less.

Year 9 basketball V Dorcan – Lost narrowly 16-12 but a fantastic performance and lots to take from the game. It was such a close game that they would like a rematch at Kingsdown school. (TBC)

With no fixtures for our netball players, they had the opportunity to put do some training.

Week beginning 17th December**Sport student of the week:**

Lewy Hayward – Plays golf and has a handicap of 6. (This is a phenomenal skill level for someone of his age). He won a golf tournament at his club, Broome Manor and is very successful in his chosen sport, following in the footsteps of his Dad, who is a pro golfer, also at Broome Manor.

**This weeks PE success and results**

Year 9 Basketball V Abbey Park 16-22 – Unfortunately, the boys lost this close tie in the final quarter. Another result that didn't go our way but still some good performances. Man of the match was Oliver Dean.

Year 8s v Abbey Park Academy – To be played.

Sport student of the week: Adam Langford

Adam competed in his first ever boxing match two weeks ago with his boxing club Walcott ABC. His first fight was a skills fight which Adam won, he also 'dropped' his opponent, knocking him to the floor. The fight consisted of three 1 minute rounds with his next fight expected to be after Christmas.

