

Fortnightly Newsletter

GATEACRE SCHOOL

24th April 2026



Supporting Every Student's Journey

In this week's bulletin, we share a variety of important updates and highlights that reflect the vibrant life of our school. From essential dates for your diary to our ongoing focus on attendance and academic progress, we remain committed to keeping you fully informed and engaged with your child's journey.

This week, we are proud to shine a **Curriculum Spotlight on Art**, showcasing the extraordinary creativity and dedication of our students. We are also excited to introduce a new dimension to our newsletters: **Pupil Perspectives**, providing direct insights into school life through the eyes of our students.

Our **Sixth Form** continues to thrive, and we have an exciting update from our Sports Department. We are currently working diligently to secure planning permission for two new **Padel courts**. This addition will not only enrich our PE curriculum but also offer a fantastic opportunity for parents and pupils to enjoy the sport together as part of our commitment to community engagement. We will keep you updated as this project progresses!

As our **Year 11 students** move into the final stages of preparation for their GCSEs, we reflect on the success of the recent Easter revision sessions. We are already looking ahead to the May half-term, where we will continue to provide high-quality intervention and reward the hard work and dedication of our learners.

Lastly, your children's safety remains our absolute priority. We are currently **enhancing our site security and safeguarding measures**, which include the installation of upgraded digital monitoring systems, more substantial perimeter gating, and the refinement of our lockdown and evacuation protocols. These steps are part of our proactive approach to creating the most secure and supportive environment possible for our community.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

PRINCIPAL - MR N. JAMIL

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CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT: ART & DESIGN

Preparation and Passion on D-Floor

As we enter the start of the Creative GCSE examination season, our Year 11 Art, Graphics, and Photography students have been demonstrating incredible dedication.

The Art Department has been transformed into a hub of focus and creativity, with students working extra hours to ensure their portfolios reach the highest possible standards.

Going the Extra Mile It hasn't just been during lesson time that D-Floor has been busy. Students have been making use of every available window - arriving early in the mornings, working through lunch breaks, and staying late after school to refine their coursework.

This culture of hard work has even inspired our Year 10 students, who have been joining these sessions to get a head start on their own projects, fuelled by the example set by their Year 11 peers.

Exam Booster Sessions

To provide our creative learners with the best possible advantage, the department is hosting dedicated **Evening Booster Sessions (3:15 pm – 5:15 pm)**. These sessions provide a calm, studious environment where students can find their focus and push through the "final hurdle" of their practical work.



In the Students' Words: The feedback from our students highlights just how much these extra sessions and the support of the Art team mean to them:

- *"Our teachers want the very best from us and are really preparing us to go into the exam."* - **Josh, Y11**
- *"I come regularly after school because the department is so welcoming; the extra time helps me concentrate and gives me a better advantage."* - **Keleece, Y11**
- *"The teachers are always there to offer help and knowledge. They've even organised breakfast up on D-Floor so we're not too anxious and can start our first real GCSE in a calm, warm environment!"* - **Macie, Y11**

A Core Value: Preparation Leads to Performance

At Gateacre, we believe that thorough preparation is the key to maximum performance. Seeing our students take ownership of their learning in such a positive, collaborative atmosphere is a testament to their maturity.

We wish the very best of luck to all our Art, Graphics, and Photography students as they begin their GCSE and A-Level exams this week. You have put in the work - now it's time to let your creativity shine.

Prioritising Safety: Our Commitment to a Secure Learning Environment

At Gateacre, our most important responsibility is the safety and well-being of our students. By fostering a secure environment, we allow our pupils to focus entirely on their learning and personal growth. As part of our ongoing commitment to acting *in loco parentis*, we are introducing several enhancements to our site and protocols to ensure both pupils and parents feel fully supported.

Building a Secure Campus

1. Enhanced Site Monitoring We are currently working with specialist school security partners to upgrade and expand our site camera network. These upgrades are designed to provide a comprehensive view of the campus, allowing us to be proactive in maintaining a safe environment and providing an extra layer of protection for every member of our community.

2. Modernising Emergency Protocols We are currently reviewing our evacuation and "in-vacuation" (lockdown) procedures. To ensure these plans are both practical and reassuring, we are actively seeking input from students and staff. This collaborative approach ensures that our protocols are robust and that everyone on site feels confident in knowing exactly what to do in an emergency.

3. Tailored Support for SEND Students We recognise that emergencies can be particularly sensitive for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We are developing bespoke support plans to ensure these students are guided with care and confidence, ensuring their safety is managed with the individual attention they require.

4. Proactive Safety Tools To maintain a high standard of safeguarding, we are exploring the use of modern detection tools, such as safety arches and handheld devices, alongside improved perimeter security. These are common-sense measures intended to reassure parents that the school remains a protected space for their children.

5. Supportive Toilet Access Protocols To ensure students are always accounted for, particularly during an emergency, we are encouraging the use of facilities during designated break times rather than during lessons. This transition helps maintain the flow of learning and ensures students are not unsupervised in communal areas. Given the wider social challenges facing many cities - such as the rise of vaping and ketamine - these structured protocols help us keep our communal spaces safe and healthy for everyone.

The Power of Pupil Voice

Transparency is key to our success. We will be holding a series of assemblies to explain the "why" behind these measures. By engaging our students in these discussions, we foster a sense of shared responsibility and ownership, ensuring they understand that these steps are taken solely for their benefit and protection.

A Holistic Approach to Safeguarding

Over the coming terms, we will be providing parents and carers with a clear "roadmap" of our procedures regarding bullying and discriminatory behaviour. We want every family to have absolute confidence in the support their child will receive.

This includes our sophisticated filtering and monitoring software, which keeps students safe online, as well as a clear, transparent escalation of consequences for any actions that compromise the safety or dignity of others. At Gateacre, we remain dedicated to a culture where every child is safe, seen, and supported.



SIXTH FORM – GATEACRE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE LIFE AT OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

Gateacre Students Experience Life at Oxford and Cambridge

It has been an incredibly busy and inspiring term for our Year 12 students, with several securing places on prestigious residential programmes at the UK's most elite universities. These opportunities are vital for demystifying the application process and showing our students that "Oxbridge" is a welcoming and achievable goal.

University of Oxford: St Peter's College Residential

Our Year 12 cohort recently returned from an immersive introduction to life at the **University of Oxford**. Staying at **St Peter's College**, students stepped into the shoes of undergraduates, experiencing the unique academic and social traditions of the university.

The itinerary was packed with high-level academic engagement:

- **STEM in Action:** Students conducted practical work in the Materials Science and Chemistry laboratories and visited the renowned Robotics Institute.
- **Cultural Exploration:** Tours included the historic Ashmolean Museum and the world-famous Bodleian Libraries.
- **Expert Guidance:** Subject-specific tutorials led by Oxford tutors gave students a taste of the rigorous "tutorial system," while workshops on personal statements and interview techniques provided a roadmap for their future applications.

The trip wasn't all work, however. Students enjoyed meals in the grand college dining hall and connected with current undergraduates to hear honest reflections on student life. A particular highlight was the evening chess tournament, where Gateacre's own **Lukas** took **second place overall** - a fantastic achievement!

University of Cambridge: Magdalene College Residential

We are also immensely proud of our students who secured places on the highly competitive residential programme at **Magdalene College, Cambridge**. This programme allows students to engage in degree-level study within their chosen fields.

Hadia (Year 12) shared her reflections on the Biological Sciences stream:

"Attending the Biological Sciences residential was incredibly inspiring, especially as I hope to pursue a career in medicine."

"From visiting the Department of Genetics to attending lectures on immune responses, I saw how scientific concepts are applied in real-world healthcare. Exploring the history of medicine at the Whipple Museum and taking part in UCAT preparation was invaluable."

"Although it was my first time traveling alone - which felt challenging at first - it became a rewarding journey that has truly strengthened my ambition to study medicine."

Upcoming Events

We look forward to celebrating more academic success shortly:

- **The Brilliant Club Graduation Ceremony:** Tuesday 28th April at the University of Manchester.

Well done to all our Year 12 students for representing Gateacre so well on the national stage!

Student Spotlight: Xian (Year 7)

A New Beginning:

Xian's First Month in Year 7

We recently caught up with one of our newest Year 7 students, **Xian**, who joined the Gateacre family just four weeks ago. After his previous school announced its impending closure, Xian made the move to Gateacre - a transition he now describes as a fortunate and exciting fresh start.

A Cultural Connection Xian's story begins in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain. Although he moved to Liverpool as a baby, he remains deeply connected to his roots, traveling back to Spain every summer to reconnect with family. One of his favourite traditions is fishing for mackerel with his father in the local port, which they then cook and share with friends - a beautiful blend of hobby and heritage.

Finding His Feet Starting a new school mid-year can be daunting. "I felt a bit lost at first," Xian admits. However, thanks to the support of his buddy, **Zack**, who helped him navigate the building and introduced him to new friends, Xian quickly settled in. He has been particularly moved by the school's atmosphere, noting, "Everyone has been really kind and inclusive."

Inspired to Create Art has rapidly become Xian's favourite subject. Creativity runs in the family; Xian is inspired by his grandfather, who is an artist. He has been particularly impressed by the facilities on D-Floor and the encouragement of his teachers as he begins to develop his own artistic style.



Success in the Classroom

Despite being with us for only a short time, Xian is already making his mark academically, particularly in Maths and English. He credits his teachers - especially **Mr. Pennington** - for helping him find his stride so quickly. A recent reward for his hard work on Sparx Science has already provided a significant confidence boost.

Looking Ahead Outside of his studies, Xian is an avid reader, currently enjoying *William Winton and the Luridium Thief*, and he is a fan of the comedy series *The Middle*. Looking forward, he is keen to immerse himself further in school life by joining the **Chess Club** and is already aiming for a spot on the summer rewards trip.

When asked for advice for other students facing a new start, Xian's philosophy is simple but powerful: **"Be nice to everyone."**

Xian has had a fantastic start to life at Gateacre, and we are incredibly excited to see all that he will achieve as he continues his journey with us.

Welcome to the team, Xian!

YEAR 11: THE ROAD TO GCSE SUCCESS

We were delighted to see such a high turnout of Year 11 students for our Easter Holiday revision and intervention sessions. With GCSE exams now just a few days away, these sessions provided a vital opportunity to finalise coursework, target key areas identified in mock exams, and solidify knowledge for the upcoming papers.

Dedication and Effort Revision sessions ran for eight days across the break, allowing students to balance intensive study with a well-earned long weekend to rest and recuperate. The engagement, conduct, and effort from all attendees were exemplary. Our teachers were incredibly impressed by the maturity and focus displayed in every classroom.

Rewarding Hard Work To celebrate this commitment, students who completed four or more sessions were invited on a complimentary trip to either **Ninja Warrior** in Speke or **Reel Cinema** in Widnes. These trips took place on the final Friday of the holidays and provided a fantastic, well-earned break.

A special mention must go to **Evan W, Annabella N, Caitlin H, Lewis M, Callum H, Ewan S, and Sahil G**, who all attended nine or more sessions across the break - truly giving themselves the best possible chance of success this summer!

Student Voice The feedback from both students and parents has been overwhelmingly positive. One Year 11 student shared:

"I came in because I knew how essential it was to keep my studies progressing. The smaller, targeted groups were so useful, and the resources helped me continue my revision at home. I particularly enjoyed Sociology and the specialised English sessions. I am so grateful for how much I have improved thanks to how caring and supportive the teachers are. Your efforts do not go unnoticed!"

Looking Ahead: May Half-Term Sessions In response to this success, we are pleased to announce a similar range of revision sessions for the **May Half-Term (Tuesday 26th – Friday 29th May 2026)**.

Following the Bank Holiday Monday, students will be invited back to school to prepare for their June examinations. We will be offering sessions in **English, Maths, Science, and Spanish**. To support our students further, we are improving our catering offer: **free breakfast, lunch, and snacks** will be provided to all attendees.

Once again, there will be exciting rewards on offer for those who engage regularly. We look forward to another excellent turnout and know that this final push will have a significant, positive impact on our students' final outcomes.

Well done, Year 11 - keep going!



EXAM BREAKFASTS: Fuelling Success

As we move further into the exam season, we want to ensure our **Year 11 students** have the best possible start to their assessment days.

Daily Exam Breakfast & Warm-Ups Every morning, we encourage all students to join us for a **free breakfast at 7:45 am**. This is a great opportunity to settle in and fuel up before attending the **Pre-Exam Warm-Up from 8:00 am to 8:30 am**, where staff provide last-minute tips and encouragement.

A 'Posh' Start for the Arts This week, our **Art** students enjoyed a special "posh" breakfast served directly in the Art studios! This allowed them to enjoy a gourmet start to the day while focusing on their final pre-exam preparations.

We are looking forward to providing the same high-end hospitality for our Graphics and Photography students during their exams next week.

Good luck to all our students - we know the hard work will pay off!

SPORT: Padel Tennis – The Planning Phase Begins

We are delighted to announce that Gateacre School is embarking on an exciting transformation of our outdoor space. Initial plans are now underway to introduce two **state-of-the-art Padel courts** to the school site - a significant investment designed to enhance our PE curriculum and foster a vibrant new level of community engagement.

What is Padel? Padel is a fast-paced, high-energy racquet sport that combines the best elements of tennis and squash. Played on a smaller, enclosed court, it is incredibly easy to learn, making it accessible for players of all ages and skill levels. As one of the world's fastest-growing sports, we believe Padel will provide our students with a unique platform to develop teamwork, strategy, and physical fitness.

A Core Component of our Enrichment Offer Padel will become a central part of our enrichment program, ensuring that every pupil, regardless of their prior experience, has the opportunity to engage with the sport. Our plans include:

- **After-School Clubs:** Weekly sessions for students to practice skills, learn the rules, and enjoy friendly matches.
- **Competitions & Tournaments:** Structured opportunities for students to compete, fostering a sense of achievement and camaraderie.
- **Skill Development Workshops:** Tailored sessions led by experienced instructors focusing on technique, strategy, and agility.



Beyond the physical benefits, this initiative will instil core values of sportsmanship, resilience, and discipline in our students.

Connecting the Community Our vision for these courts extends far beyond the school day. We aim to create an inclusive environment where **parents and children can play together**, promoting healthy lifestyles and strengthening family relationships through sport.

Furthermore, we are committed to supporting our **feeder primary schools**. By introducing younger learners to Padel, we can help build the foundations of physical literacy early, encouraging a lifelong love for staying active.

Next Steps We are currently working closely with the Local Authority regarding planning permission. We are committed to transparency throughout this process and will keep parents and stakeholders updated as the project progresses.

We hope you are as excited as we are to bring this world-class facility to Gateacre!
