



Dream big • Do your best • Give back

31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

Two weeks ago, we welcomed Challenge Partners to the school to support in our quality assurance processes. Challenge Partners is a national collective of schools where Senior Leaders join from across the UK to support schools in identifying where strengths lie and areas for further development. This year we welcomed five senior leaders to Gordano who were with us from Wednesday afternoon until Friday. As part of their work, they spoke to many students from all key stages, visited over 40 lessons and spoke to staff in a wide range of areas across the school. As part of the visit, we were delighted to be awarded accreditation in an area of excellence: Inclusion; A whole school focus. You can read the full report [here](#).

Some of the key messages from the report include:

- Challenge Partners said of Gordano that: ‘Emotional support, counselling and guidance, and pastoral care have created a safe and supportive environment. The mental health pathway, and focus upon physical health and social skills, have improved student wellbeing.’
- In addition to the accreditation for excellence in inclusion, the school was praised for its expectations for all being combined with a warm and positive ethos which ‘permeates the whole school’. Resilience and teamwork are emphasised, along with positive attitudes to others, and the successful promotion and cultivation of values such as kindness, respect, and personal organisation.
- During the review, students talked about how much help and support they get in and outside the classroom including the extensive pastoral support on offer and within the SEND provision. ‘Students feel listened to and cared for, which makes it easier for them to learn.’ The house system was also recognised for fostering a strong sense of belonging and community, creating a ‘family approach in a large school’.
- Staff were praised for being ‘experts in their specific field’ with Challenge Partners citing them as ‘extremely knowledgeable professionals’ and the peer mentoring programme where Year 11 students support Year 8 students was highlighted as a ‘powerful example of students promoting a real sense of community’.
- Gordano School works extremely hard on its Student Leadership Programme and Sixth Form students were commended for taking a lead role in the school community, such as editing the excellent ‘Griffin’ school magazine which all students read during tutor time.
- Transition was described as ‘strong’, as were personalised interventions based on thorough analysis of student data, and ‘provisions which are continually adapted to meet each student’s evolving needs.’
- The ethos of inclusion is woven throughout all aspects of school life, from teaching strategies to extracurricular activities, as well as academic and pastoral support.

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**LIGHTHOUSE**  
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

We have some clear areas for development as well which are highlighted in the report, these are already areas within our school development plan and so our work will continue. I would like to thank all students and staff involved in the process and for their on-going support for our school community and our school values.

### **Year 7 Geography Trips to Clarks Village**

On Tuesday I had the pleasure of supporting one of three days of trips to Clarks Village with our Year 7 students where they were collecting a range of data as part of their Geography curriculum. It was a pleasure to spend the day with the students (despite the cold and rain) and I would like to commend them for their brilliant behaviour and the way they represented the school during the trip. Thank you also to Mr Pugh and the Humanities team for supporting and organising our whole year-group outing.

### **OMG!**

The first ever Open Mic Gordano (OMG!) event took place on Monday evening at Clarence House in Portishead, showcasing the incredible talents of Gordano School's students. It was a packed night arranged by Mr Dorney who is new to the music department this year and supported by Dr Humphries and the wider team. We had over 150 people supporting the event and 40+ students involved in performing at the event. The feedback has been incredible and the whole of Gordano community would like to say thank you and congratulations to all the students involved and to the team for staging a fabulous event within our community.

### **Year 7 Students Launch 'Sponsor a Stone' Initiative to Help Create Hogwarts-style Space**

We value keeping our parents informed on all aspects of our school community, including ongoing efforts to improve spaces around the site. This year our teams are working hard to improve our toilet facilities, common rooms, Sixth Form café and vibrant signage in all areas.

Our Year 7 students would love for us to focus on their Elliot Hall, which acts as a haven for them while adjusting to life at Gordano School. They would like it to be reimaged into the style of the Great Hall at Hogwarts including house banners, stone effect walls, a comfy reading area, sofas, outdoor flowers and a creative corner to help them achieve a more comfortable and inspiring space that will be a legacy for years to come. Visuals on how they'd like to transform the space can be found [here](#).

We welcome parental support to help them fulfil this exciting project and therefore invite you to 'sponsor a stone' for £1 on ParentPay. It is possible to donate more if you are in a position to do so and if you know of a business who might wish to help, we would love them to email [mailbox@gordanoschool.org.uk](mailto:mailbox@gordanoschool.org.uk).

Any shortfall will be raised by the Year 7 students through a variety of fundraising efforts. We thank you in advance for your support and generosity in helping us to create an incredible space for our Year 7 students, current and future.

### **Children's Mental Health Week**

We have a full range of assemblies, tutor sessions, lunch time activities and pop ups (with visits from OTR, Kooth and NSLGBT) and will be basing discussions around the Disney 'Inside Out 2' film. We thank staff and our Sixth Form student team for organising these activities.

### **Year 10 Employability Day - Wed 29<sup>th</sup> January**

In preparation for Work Experience and practice interviews later in the school year, Year 10 engaged in a series of sessions to prepare their CV's and discuss employability skills. We would like to commend the students on their application in these sessions.

### Careers Spotlight: Bristol Airport

Please note that the next Careers Spotlight session for students starts at 3.30pm on Tuesday 4th February in the Sixth Form Hall. It will highlight the different careers available at Bristol Airport and how to get into them – careers from Airline Pilot and Cabin Crew to Ground Crew, Security and Retail. Students have been sent a ClassCharts announcement to sign up for this session, and we would welcome reminders from you at home!

### INSET DAY Reminder

A reminder that our final INSET day of the academic year is on **Friday 14th February 2025**.

We wish you all a lovely and relaxing weekend

Yours sincerely



**Ms L Blundell**  
**Headteacher**

### Key Dates for Term 3

Monday 3rd February	Year 10/11 GCSE Music trip to see Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
Tuesday 4th February	Year 11 Geography field trip to River Holford (group 1)
Tuesday 4th February	3.30pm Careers Spotlight Session – Bristol Airport
Wednesday 5th February	Year 11 Geography field trip to River Holford (group 2)
Thursday 6th February	A-level Music trip to the Welsh National Opera
Thursday 6th February	Year 12 & 13 MFL trip to BFI London
Thursday 6th February	3.35pm Year 8/9 General Knowledge Quiz
Sunday 9th February	Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Training Day
Mon 10th to Fri 14th February	National Apprenticeship Week
Monday 10th February	3.35pm MFL Spelling Bee Final
Mon 10th to Wed 12th February	Year 11 GCSE Drama Performance Exam
Tuesday 11th February	6pm Parent Forum
Wednesday 12th February	Year 8 HPV Vaccinations
Wednesday 12th February	Year 9 Travel & Tourism trip (group 1)
Wednesday 12th February	Year 11 Inclusive Curriculum trip to City of Bristol College
Wednesday 12th February	5.30 - 7.30pm Post-18 Apprenticeship Evening
Thursday 13th February	Year 11 & Year 13 Student Leadership Conference, Chew Valley School
Thursday 13th February	Year 12 & 13 English Trip, Noel Coward Theatre London
Thursday 13th February	4 - 7.30pm Year 11 Progress Evening
Friday 14th February	INSET Day
Monday 17th to Friday 21st February inclusive	HOLIDAY

## Key Dates for Term 4

Monday 24th February to Friday 7th March	Year 13 Mock Exams
Tuesday 25th February	Year 11 Dance Choreography Mock Day
Wednesday 26th February	Year 9 Travel & Tourism trip (group 2)
Thursday 27th February	4pm - 7.30pm Year 7 Progress Evening
Thursday 28th February	Year 13 Media Studies trip to BFI London
Thursday 28th February	Year 8 Aspire trip to Bath University
Tuesday 4th March	Years 7/8/9 North Somerset Dance Festival - Weston Playhouse
Wednesday 5th March	Year 11 Uniformed Services trip to Avon & Somerset Police HQ
Wednesday 5th March	3.30 – 5pm Careers Teatime Networking
Thursday 6th March	World Book Day
Thursday 6th March	Year 9/10/11 Dance trip to Swan Lake, Bristol Hippodrome
Thursday 6th March	5.30 – 7pm Year 7 Disco
Monday 10th to Friday 14th March	Year 13 MFL Speaking Mock Exams
Tuesday 11th March	Sixth Form MFL Spanish trip to BFI London
Wednesday 12th March	Year 12 UCAS Convention at Westpoint, Exeter
Wednesday 12th to Friday 14th March	Year 10 GCSE Drama Performance Exam
Friday 14th March	8.45am Sixth Form Photo
Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th March	Year 9 Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Training Days
Monday 17th to Friday 21st March	Book Fair in the School Library all week
Monday 17th to Friday 21st March	Learning Hub Functional Skills English Exams
Monday 17th to Friday 21st March	Neurodiversity Celebration Week
Monday 17th March	Year 13 A-level Music Recital (all-day exam)
Tuesday 18th March	Easter Concert all-day rehearsal
Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th March	6pm Easter Concert
Thursday 20th March	4pm – 7.30pm Year 9 Progress Evening
Thursday 20th March	Year 11 Drama trip to Bristol Old Vic (evening)
Monday 24th to Friday 28th March	Year 11 DT Mock Exam Week
Monday 24th to Friday 28th March	Learning Hub Functional Skills Maths Exams
Monday 24th March	Year 10 Cambridge National Sports Studies Assessment
Tuesday 25th to Sunday 30th March	Year 10-13 Music Tour to the Netherlands
Wednesday 26th March	Year 10 Mock Interview Day
Wednesday 26th March	Year 12 Aspire HE+ visit to Kings of Wessex

Monday 31st March to Wednesday 2nd April	Year 10 GCSE Drama Performance Exam
Tuesday 1st April	6pm Parent Forum
Wednesday 2nd and Thursday 3rd April	Year 11 Dance Choreography and Performance Exam
Thursday 3rd April	4.00 – 7.30 Year 12 Progress Evening
Monday 7th to Friday 18th April inclusive	HOLIDAY