

NEWSTLETTER



ISSUE 004

MICHAELMAS
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*Interview with
the Warden*

on page 6



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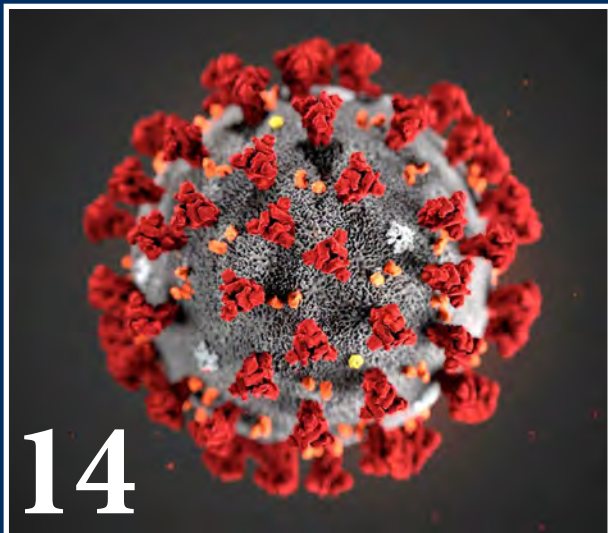
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Articles

The Pupil Takeover Edition

Introducing our Guest Editors: Ayanna, Clara and Trinity

When we were first told about the student takeover of this Newsletter, our brains started whirring away as to how we could execute this impactfully, especially under current circumstances. We wanted to focus our gaze on student opinions and achievements, as Forest is still a lively and active community - and it's good for people to be reminded of that during these challenging times. As we chose the themes for each of the sections of the school, we were very mindful about setting as few limitations as possible in order to allow people's creative juices to flow and make their pieces their own. This meant that what we received back was exciting, honest and heart-warming. We were so impressed at

the time and effort that had gone into the writing; there is something to be gained from reading each of them. Not only was piecing all the entries together enjoyable but having the privilege to create something for students by students made it even more meaningful. One of the most treasured qualities about Forest is the relationships which are developed here, so hearing 'pupil voice' in a raw and honest format allows people to connect during a time where we cannot always see each other or talk to each other, and that helps maintain a strong sense of school community. So, we hope that you enjoy reading the pieces as much as we did, as well as some very interesting responses from a special interview we did ourselves!

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... it is definitely something that I will remember after Forest.

Clara

Throughout this process, my favourite aspect was most definitely interviewing the Warden. The role reversal meant that I was able to put the Warden in the hot seat after all the times I had been interviewed by him. The opportunity to have an informal conversation whilst he answered questions that Trinity, Ayanna and I had chosen was exciting – I was especially honoured to be invited to his dream dinner party (spoiler alert)! That said, all the pieces in this Newsletter are incredibly insightful and cleverly articulated – a testament to Forest students' creativity. I hope you enjoy them as much as I did. Happy reading!

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... I was able to put the Warden in the hot seat after all the times I had been interviewed by him.



Image Our guest editors, Ayanna Davis, Clara Johnson and Trinity Batt

Trinity

The opportunity to be a guest editor for this term's newsletter has been so enjoyable. My favourite part of it all has been working with Ayanna and Clara on different aspects of its creation. Choosing the submission topics and interviewing the Warden especially come to mind. We were able to have a lot of fun working on this together - it is definitely something that I will remember after Forest. As well as enjoying our collaboration I also found that the submissions we received were incredibly considered, emotive, and should all be recognised for how impressive they are, and so I would like to thank anyone who sent in their pieces. The newsletter is really special in that it is for multiple year groups and I am really pleased that I have been part of it. As you read the interview with the Warden, you can ask yourself some of the same questions (I struggle to decide on some of my own answers) – who would you invite to your dream dinner party?

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...the privilege to create something for students by students made it even more meaningful...

Ayanna

Being a guest editor for this term's newsletter has been amazing. As someone who naturally loves to seize any opportunity, when I was presented with the idea of a 'pupil takeover' for this issue, I knew that I wanted to get involved from the get-go, and I am so glad I did! Being able to create something for students by students is really special, and I'm so happy that Trinity, Clara and I were able to work together to make this a reality. Interviewing the Warden was an enjoyable process, and I certainly learned a few things about him I didn't know before! I think this issue comes to show that despite living in challenging times, this is still a warm and lively school community – where students continue to participate and get involved. As

Head Girl this academic year, there were many things that I wanted to do which haven't been possible due to Covid – one was spending a lot more time with the new Year 7's. Despite doing that virtually, I love chatting to people and getting to know them, so by being a guest editor, I had the privilege of reading a fascinating Year 7 entry and got to know more about their unusual hobby! I can't wait for you to read it.

Interview

The Warden



Our interview with the Warden, Mr Cliff Hodges

Here is our interview which we carried out with **Mr Cliff Hodges**. We hope that you learn some new information about him and that you thoroughly enjoy reading such interesting responses! Enjoy!

To begin with, what is your earliest memory?

I had a tricycle, and I grew up in a village so there was space to go up and down the lanes. That is certainly my earliest memory.

I also remember playing in the garden at home at a very young age. I was lucky to have quite a big garden and, in those days, you had a lot of freedom in terms of going out of the house and only being expected to come back at mealtimes.



What is your most embarrassing childhood memory?

Oh gosh! I put my hand through a window, I've still got a big scar. It wasn't particularly clever - especially as I was trying to show off to siblings, as you do, and it all went horribly wrong.

I've got a sister who's 18 months older than me, and on two occasions while we were happily playing, I accidentally hit her with a stick and spade. Both times she ended up in A&E to get stitches in her head!

In your eyes, what was the best Christmas present you ever received as a child?

It was a joint present and I was probably about ten years old. We had moved to a new house and my

sisters and I were given a puppy for Christmas. We had wanted a dog for a long time; it was a breed called a Boxer. If you get a puppy there is that phase when they are unbearably cute but that is tempered by the fact that they are also unbearably messy, but it is still a great stage of having a dog.



What is your favourite Christmas movie?

Christmas movie! Ooh, that's tough! To be honest I don't think I have one. In lots of ways, I'm not a very Christmassy person. I don't know.... from memory,

Christmas movies seem to be so clichéd- last minute shopping and snowflakes falling, when for most people it's Christmas morning with family. I really enjoy Christmas in terms of family time but not in terms of the cliché stuff.

Did you have any role models growing up? Yes...having said that I don't think role models always need to be good ones. I think they can be people who you sort of admire with relief that you're not going to go down that life path...so I'm thinking of musicians, writers and rock stars – people who are 'mad, bad, and dangerous to know' and who are very exotic and attractive in that sense, but they're not necessarily people who you want to be or would want to



live with. So yeah, lots of musicians, for example...people like Bob Dylan, the Beatles...I can talk to death about them!

But also, actors - the 70s was a fantastic era for American films in particular. At that time, new young directors often portrayed troubled characters at odds with life and introduced great screen actors like Jack Nicholson and Al Pacino.

I was also a big fan of motor racing as it was something I went to with my

father, and in those days, you could go to a Formula 1 race and you had access to all areas - you could go to the pits and meet the drivers.

The drivers were amazingly brave – one Formula 1 driver used to die every 3 or 4 races. You would never get in one of those cars unless you were committed or deeply attracted to such risk, so those are the sort of people who are braver than I could ever be, or more exotic than one could ever be.



What inspires you?

To be honest, through my job it's young people...they inspire me. Someone the other day reminded me that when the Americans first went to the moon, the average age of people working at NASA was 26. 26 might be old to you...but to me 26 is so young as to be extraordinary, and so many great things in the world have been done and created by young people.



Again, if you look at music...look at what Mozart achieved before the age of 18, many great writers and poets, and all the great pop & rock music created by people under the age of 25. Young people make the world happen, so they tend to be very inspiring. I also find Forest pupils very inspiring in lots of ways. One of the pleasures of my job is to have the privilege of seeing young people work and perform and discuss things. The engagement of young people and the energy they put into what



they do is what is inspiring, I think.

And I believe your generation is particularly inspiring because for the first time in a while you are a generation looking at the world saying, 'This could be a fairer, better place'. And actually, at a very young age, many of your generation want to do something about that and not just think 'Oh, I'll wait until I'm 30 or 40'... but instead are thinking 'I can do something now'. And, to me, that is genuinely inspiring.

How would you rate your memory?

Right now, well, it's selective. It's quite good about all sorts of things that I think are important. For example, names, telephone numbers and conversations. On the other hand, when people leave Forest and become Old Foresters and you bump into them, I have no concept of which year they left. I know that they are Old Foresters, but they just go into one big timeless pool of Old Foresters. I'm not a spring chicken but I just

think that your memory become more selective. So, generally, I think I have a pretty good memory, but the really interesting thing about memory is that it often cheats you, so even if you can recall things which you think are absolutely true, they may not have happened in that order, or at all, when you check the facts.

What is a motto you live by?

"In Pectore Robur", of course! I think it's a good motto to live by, particularly in these times. When I went to school, a school founded in 1926 (I wasn't one of the first pupils, thank you!), the founding headmaster who was thought to be quite liberal said he wanted all the pupils on leaving to be, in his words, "acceptable at a tea dance and useful in a shipwreck".

I've never been to a tea dance, but what he meant was that when the going gets tough you need to do something and help people, but that there are also other times in life when one should be good company as well and enjoy being with other people. I try to do that. This year has certainly been a shipwreck in many ways, and I hope I have been helpful in some sort of way.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Well...two things really. In family sense – being a parent and being a husband definitely; but also, being Warden of Forest School. For me, it's a great achievement, not one I was expecting in some ways but it's a fantastic job. In a large school like this, you're trying to create the conditions in which other people do fantastic work...so it's not about doing everything yourself, that's not really leadership, it's about creating the conditions here at Forest where staff and pupils will do brilliant work... that's what the reward is as well.



One thing I've tried to do to is create the feeling at Forest that it's okay to question what we do and how we do it, on the basis that you shouldn't have a school where you do things just because Forest has always done those things. I think Forest is such a great and fantastic school that we can afford to be ambitious and forward looking, and outward looking. I hope there is a momentum towards being even better and looking at how pupil experience can be better.

So, as a leader in some ways you need to be a little bit restless, you can enjoy things but not sit back and say, 'Right, that's it...we've arrived'. As with you lot, it's the journey that's the interesting bit.

What is the most important lesson life has taught you?

I think in the end, the most important lesson is that things like happiness and beauty come from within people and from people eventually being pleased or satisfied enough with who they are. There is a lot of striving in the world and that does not always bring people much satisfaction or reward particularly when people strive to be something which they are not. Often, I think

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come from within
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being pleased or
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who they are.*

people are better when they accept - and that does not mean to passively accept - who they are. Accepting that they will not be someone who they are not, and that they may not do things which other people around them do, is important. If we can find ways to accept that, work on that and use that as our platform, we can be much happier.

Partly fuelled by social media, people spend so much time looking for affirmation and striving and I think that is often wasted energy. When you see people who are happy, happy within themselves, their interactions with other people are happier too.

If you had to create a playlist of your life, could you name some songs you'd put on it and why?

I'd certainly have some Beatles songs on there partly because I grew up with them, they're the soundtrack to various times in my life, but also because their story is amazing and redefined pop and rock music.

It is difficult to remember that no one made music like them before they did! Initially, it was amazingly fresh and joyous and later technically ambitious. All of that in 10 years maximum, extraordinary!

Funnily enough, being at school with regular chapel, certain hymns that I hear takes me straight back to Forest School Chapel.



My mother was a classical musician, she played the cello, so some cello concertos too. I listen to a lot of music – everyday! Often when I'm walking the dog. Music is very important to me.

What is your greatest fear?

Well, this interview was one of them until it started! In reality, of course, it's losing people, that's always a huge fear.... losing parents, friends, children or people around you.

In a totally different, more practical sense, I don't like rats! And I say that because in my office here at Forest, which is one of the oldest parts of the school, there are hollow skirting boards around the edge of the room and sometimes you can hear rats (from the forest around us) running down them, scuttling, and even fighting.



So, if you've ever been here for a meeting, and I know you have, one of my biggest fears is that when I'm with parents or governors, rats are going to break out of the skirting boards! It's even worse when they die in the large cellars under here; they just lie there and rot and the smell - particularly in the summer - is awful.

What is your most treasured possession?

Well, on the basis you don't possess people, I would say my dog. I don't know if any of you have met my dog, but he comes into school a lot and is a golden retriever.

If you had to put an item in a time capsule, what would you put and why?

Ooh...these questions are getting even tougher! What would I put in a time capsule? Hmm, right now, If I could get hold of the first Covid vaccine I'd put that in a time capsule because historically I think this year will be remembered as an extraordinary one in terms of world

history. Interestingly one of the governors of Forest School said the other day that this year has been the most difficult year for the school since World War 2 and it probably has. Not just for Forest, but for the whole country. Even at my age, I haven't seen or experienced a year like this at all. Anyway, it's important to put things in a time capsule that sum up our age, so I guess also the usual things like mobile phones...and a McDonald's takeaway meal!

Which country out of the ones you've travelled to, did you like most?

Over the past five years, as a family we have visited a Northern European or Scandinavian city every year for a short break including Stockholm, Copenhagen and Amsterdam. I am quarter Swedish and so that has been fun to do and we are hopefully looking forward to ticking off Oslo at some point.



My wife's family moved to New Zealand when she was quite young and we have had many happy trips there. It is an amazing and wild place which is sort of empty due to the few people there. I have always really enjoyed visiting America too.

American cities like New York, Chicago and San Francisco are exciting places to spend time. I also always enjoy France's culture and food, although given the choice, I would be very happy hillwalking in the North-West corner of Scotland as

an antidote to city life. It is a wild and empty landscape, and it is fantastic.

What is your most treasured life skill?

Treasured by who? By me, well increasingly, cooking! I enjoy cooking. I don't have a wide repertoire, but in terms of home cooking, I can cook pretty well. Good simple things like risottos. You can cook good risottos and bad risottos, and my risotto is a good risotto.



What is something you have learnt in the past year?

I've learned once again that life can be pretty cruel and can be pretty sad, and I'm talking about things that have happened at Forest and in the wider world. You never know what life is going to throw at you – which is a blessing as much as a curse. Whenever people get comfortable, life has a way of pulling the rug out from under them - which can be energising in a good way but can also be devastating.

Losing Heath (Corkery) last year was totally devastating. In the pandemic, there are still all sorts of causes for celebration in terms of there being a lot of people out there doing a lot of good things, and we shouldn't lose sight of that.

What is an act of kindness that you have never forgotten?

The other day during Wellbeing Week I received a nice note from

a pupil which basically just said 'Thinking about you'. It was lovely because there are so many reasons not to send something like that or do something like that, but those are very treasured things which are simple and mean a huge amount. There isn't anyone waiting to feel a valued glow from doing that - it is just a genuinely thoughtful and good thing to do.

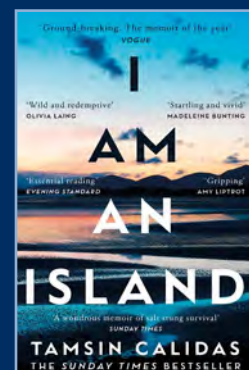
Who would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Well obviously, you three! Got to keep in your good books! This is going to be tricky.... I would want some good after dinner entertainment so I would invite Aretha Franklin and hopefully she'd agree to sing for her supper! There is a journalist I admire called Christopher Hitchens who was a contrarian and couldn't get out of bed in the morning without having an argument. If you want a good dinner party, you don't want people who are going to sit there and agree with each other. I think Dorothy Parker once said, "If you haven't got anything nice to say about anyone, come and sit next to me". So, for some good gossip Dorothy Parker as well! I also think Marcus Rashford has earned a place at the table. A well-deserved good meal after all the meals he has provided for others this year.



What is your favourite book?

It's impossible to choose after a lifetime of reading, but two powerful books published recently which I read this year and enjoyed in very different ways were Kiley Reid's sharp novel on attitudes to class and race in America, 'Such a Fun Age'. And Tamsin Calidas' extraordinary memoir of living alone on a Scottish island, 'I Am an Island'.





Articles

Lower School

Oliver from Year 7 tells us all about his passion for Go-karting

My name is **Oliver Sander** (Y7) and I joined Forest School this year. My greatest passion is karting. I have been karting since 2017 but recently have taken my hobby more seriously.

I think it's a fantastic sport because it combines speed, physicality, adrenaline and competitive racing every time you go. It is such a thrill to line up on the start line, rev the engine.... and wait for the green lights to come on!

My first karting experience was in hire karts at Rye House Kart Raceway, the same track that Lewis Hamilton drove at 25 years ago. I then progressed to the Rye House Kart Championship, racing in faster hire karts and starting to win races.

Last year I finally convinced my parents to buy me my own Honda Cadet kart. I was more than excited as I could now reach speeds of up

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My first karting experience was in hire karts at Rye House Kart Raceway, the same track that Lewis Hamilton drove at 25 years ago.

to 60mph and do so without any seat belts! Sometimes one does collide with other karts or hit the tyre walls around the track but, so far, I have only suffered a sprained ankle and a very sore neck a couple of times. I do wear race gloves, a rib protector, a neck brace and a very good crash helmet in order to avoid more serious injuries.

After the first lockdown this year, I finally decided to join a national race team. My team is called 'Cutting Edge Racing' and has produced a couple of British Champions and a current Formula 2 driver, Callum Ilott. My first few months with the team have been amazing. I have travelled to different tracks around the country from Cumbria to Kent with some great results. I won my first Motorsport UK race back in February, won best novice at Sherington Kart Club and came 7th in the London Cup which I was particularly happy about.

I am now moving up to a new class of karts called Minimax. This is partly because I am quite tall, and my Honda Cadet kart is a bit too small for me. I am really looking forward to starting in Minimax this month as the kart has a top speed of 72mph. I would love to go even faster but have to wait for that a little bit longer.



As far as next year is concerned, well, let's hope there will be a lot more racing without any lockdowns. I want to compete in the British Championship and win a few more trophies. Weekends will be tough. Getting up at 5.30am on Saturdays and Sundays is not unusual when travelling to races and homework often needs to be done in the team awning between heats and finals.

I would also very much enjoy being part of a Forest School Karting Team so please let me know if you think you might share my passion. Believe me, it's thrilling to find out exactly how fast you can drive around a corner without flying into the barriers.



IMAGES

- 1 Racing at Whilton Mill
- 2 Winning my first MSA race
- 3 Lunchbreak pit stop
- 4 My new kart



Articles

Middle School

In the Pupil Takeover Edition: Middle School pupils were invited to share their opinions – **Oran Docker** argues the case for lowering the voting age and **Sophie Ella Hill** talks common sense.

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On average just 43% of 18-24-year olds vote in elections, but obviously no one is suggesting the voting age should be increased to 25.

Reducing the Voting Age

Voting is one topic that absolutely never causes disagreements – so I have wisely decided to tackle it. Whilst most people whole-heartedly agree with the principle of voting - a notable exception being the President of the United States - there is one issue that remains up for debate. That issue is, of course, the age at which a citizen of a country may vote in regional and national elections – should the minimum voting age be reduced to 16?

Regardless of personal opinion, although both sides have respectable arguments, what is undeniable is the rapid growth in popularity that 16+ voting has received in recent years. Currently LibDem, Labour and the Green Party all support 16+ voting. One major argument for keeping voting at 18+ is the claim that 16-17-year-olds are simply not politically interested and will therefore

make ignorant choices – if they vote at all.

Whilst it is most certainly true that the percentage of voters within age groups increases with age, if we are to bar ages from voting until at least 51% of their age group votes, then the voting age would need to be moved to up to 25. On average just 43% of 18-24-year-olds vote in elections, although, obviously, no one is suggesting the voting age should be increased to 25.

Fundamentally, you should not lose **your** right to vote because **another** person in your age category chooses not exercise that right and does not vote. If we are to take the logic of this sentiment and continue to include 18-24-year-old voters, it is only logical that this extends to those aged 16-17.

Furthermore, some political analysts suggest that decreasing



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*Remain views increased as age decreased
 with 71% of 18-24-year-olds voting to
 remain.*

the voting age to 16 would increase the amount of young people voting overall because it would start the habit of voting younger. If a 16-year-old is able to have a job, children and get married, it should be a human right to have a say in how their government operates.

Now, you have been subjected to far too long of a read without the mention of Brexit! So, in typical British fashion, it is my duty to remedy this. Brexit, regardless of belief, will affect the generations who were 16-17 during the referendum. At the time, this age category was made up of roughly 1,500,000 people and according to polling done by NUS,

around 75% said they would have voted if they had been given the opportunity.

Remain views increased as age decreased with 71% of 18-24-year-olds voting to remain. Every single age group (65+, 50-64, 25-49, 18-24) included votes to Remain (if going from old to young groups) with the exception of 18-24-year-olds who added a large 17% to the overall Remain vote. Following this trend, the percentage of 16-17-year-old voters would (conservatively) in turn be more than the 18-24-year-olds. [see statistics]

This clearly shows that given this age-category will have to live with

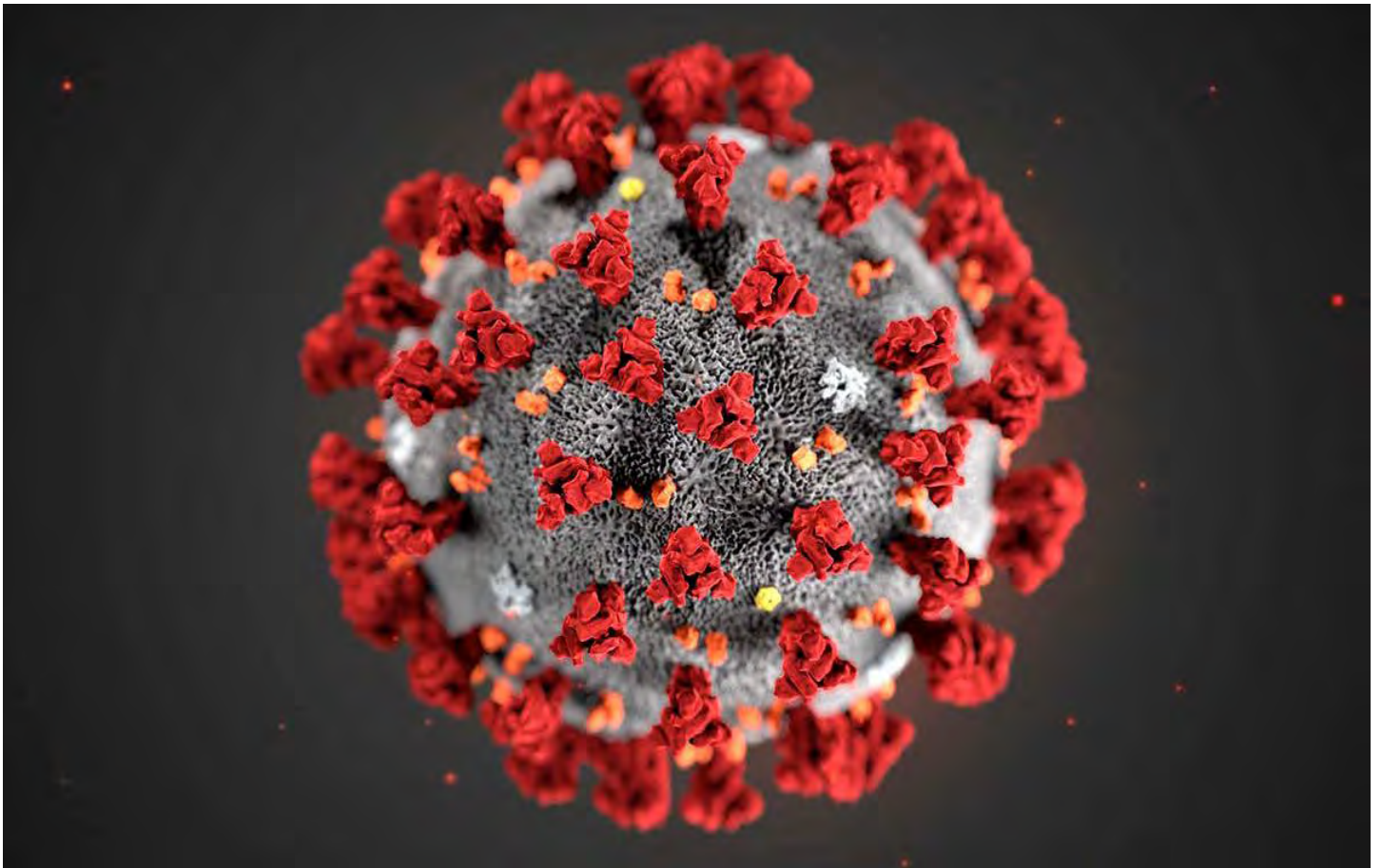
Remain vote = 48.1%
 vs **Leave vote** = 51.9% -
 (2016 outcome)

Revised Remain vote =
 50.6% vs **Revised Leave
 vote** = 49.4% - (outcome
 including 16-17-year-olds)

the impacts of Brexit the longest, it was simply immoral to deny them their right to vote when it could have influenced the outcome so significantly. Finally, the claim that 16-17-year-olds will be ignorant voters, seems to suggest that the adult voting population in our society isn't comprised of ignorant voters. This can easily be proven by the fact that some people voted for the Green party expecting them to win!

* (Polling data included above comes directly from the government or from NUS when referring to potential 16-17-year-old turnout)

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*Regardless of personal opinion, although both sides have respectable
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 16+ voting has received in recent years.*



Common Sense? More like an error of judgement

Whilst scientists are advising, with increasing force, that Covid restrictions be kept in place for Christmas, the government last week announced that it had instead decided to rely upon people's common sense. Boris Johnson has urged people to keep Christmas celebrations "small, short and local" but said that the government would stick to its plan to relax restrictions to allow multiple families to meet over five days to celebrate Christmas.

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We must remember how serious the position has become.

Surely this makes sense. People can be trusted to behave responsibly: we've now heard about the risks of COVID-19 long enough make the correct decisions, right?

Well, maybe. We must remember how serious the position has become. As of 18th of December, there have been in excess of 66,000 deaths in the UK due to Covid, numbers of infections are rising rapidly, and we now have reports that the virus has mutated into a more contagious form.

In which case, should we really be left to deal with this alarming situation and make the right decisions for ourselves?

Do people really have the right tools to make these judgements?

Citizens obviously do not have the detailed information and data which the government receives daily from experts and are therefore not necessarily able to make sufficiently informed decisions.

Will people behave responsibly?

The evidence we have seen to date, including images of Christmas shoppers flooding high streets, suggests the moment people are given any kind of freedom, many choose to

take advantage whilst overlooking the most basic precautions.

Does allowing people to make choices for themselves, rather than imposing rules, accurately convey the seriousness of the situation?

I would say not. By telling people that they are now responsible enough to have this freedom, when in other less serious situations, they were not, Johnson was implying that the current situation need not be taken as seriously as it should.

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...numbers of infections are rising rapidly...



We also must ask ourselves, why now?

Why is it that for the rest of the year, we are seen as unable to make decisions regarding our health and safety, but through a Christmas miracle, suddenly possess the ability to make our own decisions for this five-day period?

All of the above makes a very persuasive case that the problem is serious enough and that the restrictions need to stay in place; so why was the government thinking otherwise? Well, I think we can probably narrow it down to three reasons: firstly, commercialisation.

A typical household spends over £800 at Christmas - if restrictions are not relaxed businesses are obviously at risk of losing that money; the

second reason was popularity. Boris Johnson made it quite clear that he did not want to be seen as the man who 'cancelled Christmas'; the third reason was shifting responsibility.

If the country encountered another spike after Christmas, this would be down to people not having the common sense to behave responsibly. The government could not be held responsible.

Well sorry, but this really isn't good enough – and I am very happy that Mr Johnson now seems to have been persuaded of the error of his ways. In a "U-turn" on Saturday (19th December), the government scrapped its plan to lift restrictions for 5 days, imposed stricter restrictions in some places, including London,

and reduced the period of relaxation elsewhere to just Christmas Day.

Annoying as this might be, it is the right thing to do. I think we **are** responsible enough to put up with restrictions for one Christmas if it will save lives.

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*...the virus has
 mutated into a more
 contagious form.*

Articles

Sixth Form

Advice I would give to my younger self

Sixth formers look back and tell us about their year 7 selves, and what advice they would have given themselves on starting at Forest.



IMAGE Henna Ranu, Aged 11

“*I didn't know who I was, and I still don't, not fully anyway. If it's any consolation, I don't think anyone does.*”

Henna Ranu

When I was younger, I struggled with who I was because I acted differently when with different people. I was an expert in the art of self-hatred, labelling myself as fake and the worst person to ever live. I couldn't deal with being alone because I didn't know who I was when I wasn't around others. I feel sad for her.

I struggle with depression and when you feel like your friends hate you, the world is literally burning, and racism/sexism/homophobia still exist, it can be hard to see the point in doing well in your GCSEs.

I didn't know who I was, and I still don't, not fully anyway. But if it's any consolation, I don't think anyone does. After a long discussion with my

mum, I have decided that actually no young person knows what they are doing (even if they look like they do). It is important to take one day at a time. My younger self saw her world caving in. I now know that the whole world is caving in on the back of Covid, for everyone. I guess perspective really is key.

So, if I could talk to my younger self, I would definitely tell her to keep doing what she's doing, I wouldn't tell her to do anything differently. It has been a long ride but I'm quite happy with how I have turned out in light of everything that has happened in the past.

All I would want to do is offer a simple reminder (cringey and -when depressed - the most irritating phrase known to man): “It will all be okay!”

Henry Douglas

There seems to be a million things that I would like to have known as a younger child, but not even being 18 yet, it feels as though I don't have the right to tell that small, innocent Year 7 Henry how he should live the next eight years of his life. I believe that it's the mistakes and the experiences that make us who we are as people and who we are today. If I would have known the things I know now and how to avoid certain circumstances I wouldn't be writing this at all. And I most definitely wouldn't have had the fun, exciting adventures that often come in the aftermath of a mistake. But that's life, I guess. I know that

sounds pretty ironic coming from a literal child, but I am completely accepting of the fact that I have many more mistakes to overcome in the near future as well as the longer term. There will be lessons that I must learn if I am to become the person, I will be in 5, 10, 50 years, but I would want to look back at this time in my life and be happy that I had made those mistakes because that's what makes for an exciting life, I think.

However, I shall abide by the rules and regulations of the Forest Newsletter and write this piece about the things I would have liked to know as a younger child. So here it is.



IMAGE Henry Douglas, Aged 11

Dear Henry,

The most important piece of advice that I can give you is to not be afraid of being out of your comfort zone. When you start Forest and begin this new journey in your life there will be times where things seem scary and, all of a sudden, anxiety hits and you start to panic but all I can say to that is when your anxiety peaks it can't go anywhere else but down. So just breathe, and truly understand that everything will be okay in the end, it may not feel like it when your heart is going a million miles an hour but trust me, I've been through it and I've realised that it does get easier if you just breathe.

Secondly, don't feel afraid to not fit in at the beginning because you're going to find the people that you can really be yourself with, so you may have to endure some awkward and strange conversations, but you'll be okay in the end. So just be yourself and just enjoy the fun times even if some people may think you're a little odd - that doesn't matter, as long as you're having a good time, that's all you need to worry about.

And finally, the one thing that I would like my younger self to know is that you should stick to the one thing you're quite good at, and that is being empathetic. Because empathising with people and listening to someone when they really need it is not 'wet' or 'moist' but, in reality, it's one of the kindest things someone can do for another, and you're very good at it. People will want to be listened to even if it is just about how their night was, but it makes people feel good if they have someone that they can talk to and I think you are that person and will be that person. So, don't stop being empathetic and keep listening to people and just be kind, that's the best piece of advice I can give you.

In conclusion, basically just do everything that I did because you turned out okay, I think. Well, that's up to other people to decide, but you're happy where you are and if you did anything differently then you wouldn't be here writing this piece. So, make the mistakes, have the fun, enjoy the nights out and the nights in because they count too, and throw yourself in at the deep end in everything you do because you'll reach the surface no matter what.

“
*It is important to
take one day at a
time.*

“
*...I'm quite happy
with how I have
turned out...*

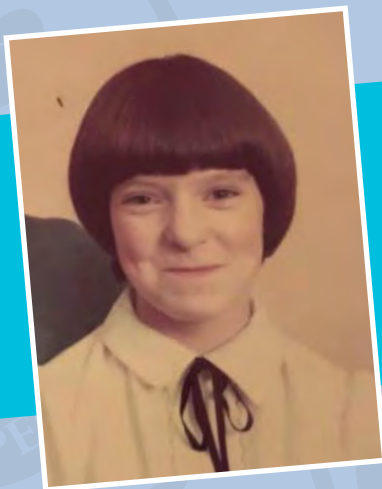
“
*...there will
be times where
things seem
scary...*

“
*...don't feel
afraid to not
fit in...*

Guess Who?

A selection of our Forest staff have shared a photo of them when they were 11 years old. **Can you work out who they all are?** We have given you a clue with their house colours.







Welcoming our new Year 7s



This September we welcomed a new cohort of Year 7s to Forest school, just as we do every year. This has, of course, been a very different year in all sorts of ways with one extremely positive change being the launch of the new Forest School uniform in smart navy blue with gold piping. We were also pleased that our new Year 7s were able to participate in a variety of 'ice breaker' activities to help them feel at home, make new friends, and enjoy the benefits of our 50-acre site.

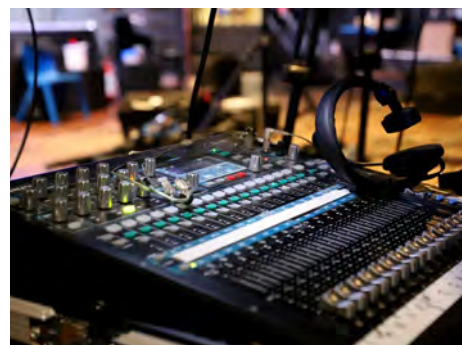
Whilst many of our regular events sadly could not go ahead as originally

planned, this did lead to innovative online alternatives and several of our Year 7 pupils participated in a Forest first in November – a live online broadcast to prospective parents considering Forest School for their children.

We had held a number of successful virtual events prior to the broadcast, but we had feedback from parents asking if we could find a way to give families a 'feel' for the School Forest whilst we were unable to welcome visitors on site. Our response was to recruit our best ambassadors – our pupils.

“

Just a quick note to say we thought the kids did a fantastic job. It was really engaging, and I loved their honesty! They were bright and funny and kind – everything we would want in schoolmates for our son.



Some of our new Year 7 pupils were filmed playing instruments, participating in sport, working with the 3D printer and conducting a science experiment, whilst a panel of four boys and four girls attended School on the morning of November 21st and gave their spontaneous answers to questions put to them by families live on the day. This approach was a big hit with families at home.



EDI Newsletter

This term Forest School launched its Equality Diversity Inclusion newsletter.

There is much to be proud of in terms of EDI at Forest but there will always be more to explore and learn. As in all learning across the curriculum at Forest, EDI requires constant evolution by being prepared to ask difficult questions to arrive at a deeper understanding.

The newsletter highlights the work being done in School and brings all Forest families up to date. It details an exciting period of learning and review that will make Forest School a stronger and more explicitly representative community for every single pupil to be known, liked and valued.

The editors of the newsletter would really like to hear from you. Please do e-mail diversityandinclusion@forest.org.uk to express ideas and thoughts on any aspect of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Forest School.



Highlights

Events Round Up

Foodbank Fridays at Forest

Community in Action: Forest pupils across all the year groups have been busy this term giving their time to a number of charitable and community-led projects.



On **Friday 20th November** the School launched its Foodbank Friday initiative in association and support of the Trussell Trust and Redbridge Foodbank.

The first collection took place on Friday 20th November and Forest pupils managed to donate over 222 kilogrammes of food items.

Foodbank Fridays are set to become part of the Forest routine so that as a school we can regularly give to those most in need in the communities around us.

Mr Cliff Hodges spoke at all year group virtual assemblies about the wider context of this initiative. He spoke about how and why people are referred to food banks. And that food banks partner with a range of care professionals who provide compassionate, practical support to people in crisis. He accepted that bringing tins of food into school was straightforward enough; but encouraged all pupils to explore, learn and ask questions in the hope that they would develop a slightly wider sense of what they are doing.



Craft Donation

Another group of pupils designed and sewed by hand teddies and trinkets for residents of Haven House hospice.



Christmas Celebration

This year, as with many other things, our Annual Carol service had to be re-imagined – it was recorded and edited into a film and shared digitally.

The celebration film contained many of the traditional readings and carols but added poetry, photos and other messages, all of which, including the beautiful singing, helped us share in a peaceful Christmas moment together.

Virtual Christmas Concert

Our Year 11 Community in Action group spent the last days of term preparing a virtual Christmas Concert for the residents of the Forest Dene Care Home. They also sent handmade Christmas cards.



PHOTOGRAPHY Forest School
Christmas Tree, Slawek Zieba



Book Collection

The Forest Community came together again this term to help support a partnership-in-education initiative. Pupil, parents and staff donated books to a maintained school in Dagenham that had

received funding to build a new Library but needed some support in filling its shelves! The new Robert Clack School library now hosts almost 700 books collected from Forest School.



Remembrance Sunday

Every year, as a school community we gather to remember those who have died and suffered, and those who continue to die and suffer, as a result of war, and we commit together to a peaceful future. This year our gathering took a virtual form and many members of the Forest

Community joined us to reflect and give thanks. The service was recorded and contributions from various Sections of the School, staff, pupils, musicians and, of course, the CCF cadets.



Present Collection

Forest donated 238 high quality gift wrapped Christmas presents for charity KidsOut and children who have had to quickly flee domestic violence.



Save Hackney Empire

A non-uniform day; a Krispy-Kreme doughnut sale and a sponsored Theatre-a-thon raised almost £10,000 to help support and save Hackney Empire.



CHOOSE LOVE

Donated Essentials

Our Year 8 Community in Action group gathered hundreds of essential items donated by Forest pupils to help refugees in Greece and the charity Choose Love.





Who ate all the pies?

On 1st December the House MasterChef finals took place. This year the challenge was pie making!

A fantastic array of beautiful pies was submitted from pretty spiced apple and 'Cherry Christmas' pies to sumptuous banoffee pies to impressively peaked lemon meringue pies.

All 14 houses had initial pie-making rounds and the winner from each house was selected for entry into the finals.

A panel of 7 judges took part in the Covid compliant tasting sessions.

The winners were as follows:

Boys' Houses:

1st Place

Zac Aspery - Year 13
(Lemon Meringue Pie)
Miller's House

2nd Place

Jonathan Young - Year 13
(Lemon Meringue Pie)
Copeland's House

3rd Place

Ben Pain - Year 8
(Lemon Meringue Pie)
Bishop's House

Girls' Houses:

1st Place

Clementine Coup - Year 7
(Spiced Apple Pie)
Astell House

2nd Place

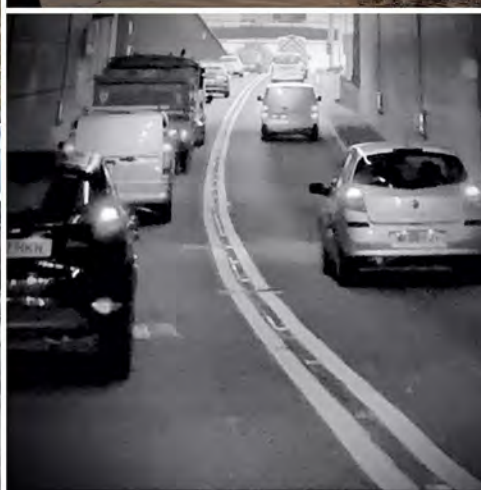
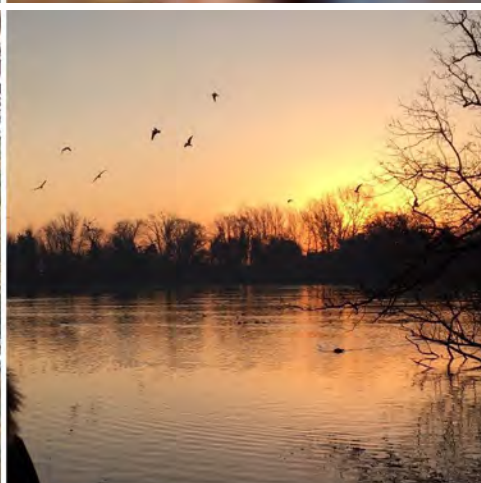
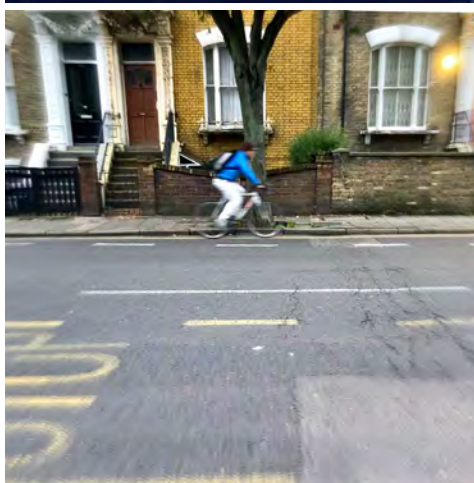
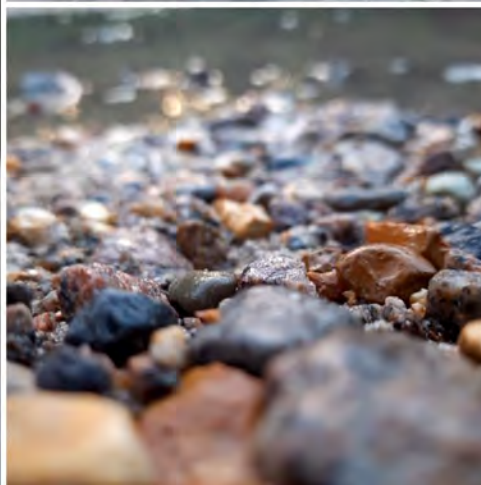
Erica Walkley - Year 7
(Fruit and Custard Pie)
Baylis House

3rd Place

Charly Blair - Year 10
(Lemon Meringue Pie)
Franklin House

Wellbeing Photo Competition

As part of Wellbeing Week we asked pupils to take photographs of their daily commute to school, resulting in striking images of the urban grind alongside the beauty of the forest.



House Music

Our talented pupils worked incredibly hard in very carefully distanced conditions (and later in lockdown) to bring House Music to the screen.

In a couple of cases, self-isolating musicians played along on screen with the rest of the band live on site at Forest, but then Forest pupils are nothing if not resilient!

Bands, ensembles, and soloists had to adapt to extraordinary and unexpected changes throughout the term, meeting challenges with resilience and determination.

The House Music finals were filmed in the penultimate week of the Michaelmas term and the video premiered on YouTube on the last day of term.

The results were as follows:

Girls' Houses:

Joint 1st Place
Franklin and School

3rd Place
Kingsley

Joint 4th Place
Astell and Elliot

6th Place
Baylis

7th Place
Hepworth

Boys' Houses:

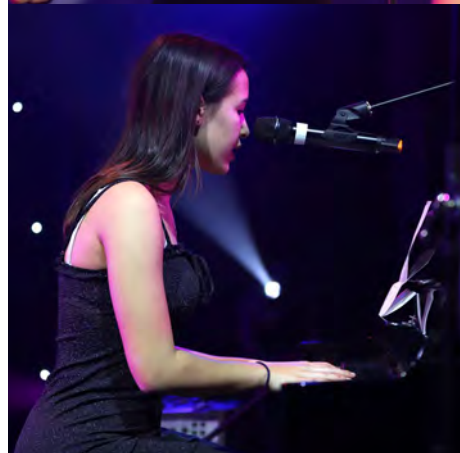
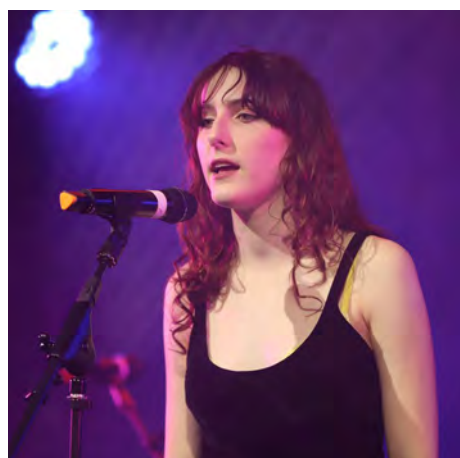
1st Place
Doctor's

Joint 2nd Place
Miller's and Johnnians

4th Place
Bishop's

6th Place
Poole's

Joint 7th Place
Guy's and Copeland's



1ST PLACE (Joint) School House trio



Highlights

Sport

This term Sport at Forest was confined to bubbles with no Inter School Fixtures, however grass-roots sport went full steam ahead!

Saturday Sport

Sport at Forest this term was confined to bubbles with no interschool fixtures allowed. Each weekend saw a different combination of year group bubbles playing hockey and allowing pupils to play with someone different each time enabled them to showcase their skills.

World Cup Football Tournaments were held within each boys' year groups. There were some fiercely competitive matches and thrilling end results.

This term Netball Clubs featured as a separate lunchtime activity so that pupils could play as much as possible.





House Sport

As usual the incredibly competitive House Football and House Hockey events took place with Jenks and Fine points up for grabs.

Swimming

At the start of the term swimming was permitted during normal school hours. And by the half term break squad training was back within year group bubbles. The year bubble squad training proved a great success with all swimmers raising their game.

Cross Country

This term the Cross Country Club was extremely popular in the Lower School with over 50 pupils attending on either Tuesdays or Thursdays. The smiles say it all!

Cricket

As the main square was not being used for football fixtures it meant that cricket could be played even in the Michaelmas term! Both boys and girls played a mixture of 10 and 20 over matches.





FOREST
SCHOOL

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