



# Leading Edge Overview 2012-13





Gordano is proud to have been a Leading Edge school since 2003, which reflects our belief in innovative teaching and learning and 'bottom-up' school improvement and our commitment to student engagement and achievement.

When Gordano became a Leading Edge school, the funding was used to support a wide range of projects that are now fully embedded into teaching and learning across the school, such as redesigning learning environments; assessment for learning; techniques for improving boys' motivation; the use of traffic lighting and an increased focus on developing thinking skills. Since 2008, projects have been closely aligned to the school's targets as set out in the School Development Plan and the Learning Policy, two crucial documents that are summarised by the diagram below, which each teacher has a copy of.

After having achieved an 'Outstanding' grading in every category from Ofsted in April 2012, we have spent the last year consolidating this best practice and ensuring consistency whilst also challenging ourselves to look beyond this. In particular,

we have put a lot of time and energy into: rewriting the Learning Policy; developing the independence and effort agenda; launching a new system of self-evaluation; improving and developing students' employability skills and researching how best to integrate new technologies into learning.

Many projects that were successful last year, such as the Comenius project between Gordano and schools in Denmark, France, Germany and Italy and the Challenge Programme, have been extended this year to involve even more students. As we believe in providing an outstanding all round education for students, we're hoping to develop an even richer variety of opportunities for students in 2013-14 with an increased focus on extra curricular activities.

In addition to school improvement within Gordano, we continue to share best practice both locally and nationally, for example through our status as Lead School for Gifted and Talented and the work of our Advanced Skills Teachers/ Specialist Leaders in Education/our involvement in the North Somerset Learning Exchange.





As the diagram below shows, the Skills for Life agenda is threaded through everything we do, with a focus on effort and independent learning and embedding Personal Learning and Thinking Skills into curriculum and pastoral provision as well as through enrichment and engagement programmes such as the Potential Programme, work experience and MyPM and MyLife. Our Leading Edge specialism and our historic work as a Training School, Gifted and Talented Lead School and Technology College are used as drivers for the School Development Plan (above), helping to provide personalised pathways and opportunities for our students; innovation in teaching and learning as well as developing both student and staff's skills and leadership.

The 2013-14 School Development Plan shifts the school's focus towards developing an outstanding 'all round' education, with focus on providing a

broad and rigorous curriculum whilst developing the whole person through a wide range of opportunities; innovating and sharing the best approaches to deliver outstanding teaching and learning; using technology to make learning effective and engaging; strengthening relationships with young people and families; become a leader in education system and developing a safe, high quality learning environment.

Some of the developments we're particularly excited about are the work being done on developing Independent Learning and the creation of a 'Learner profile' for students; a refresh of skills and dispositions for learning (formerly Gordano's Language for Learning) into a new 'Skills Wheel' and development of a new system of peer observation for staff. We are really pleased that we are able to host the Olevi Outstanding Teacher and Improving Teacher Programmes.

## Skilled for Life





## Gordano Leading Edge and the School Development Plan

Gordano's Leading Edge projects are closely aligned to the School's Development Plan and the programme's funding is directed towards areas that we believe will have a positive effect on students' learning experiences and success.

The diagram below shows the Strategic Vision the school is working towards.



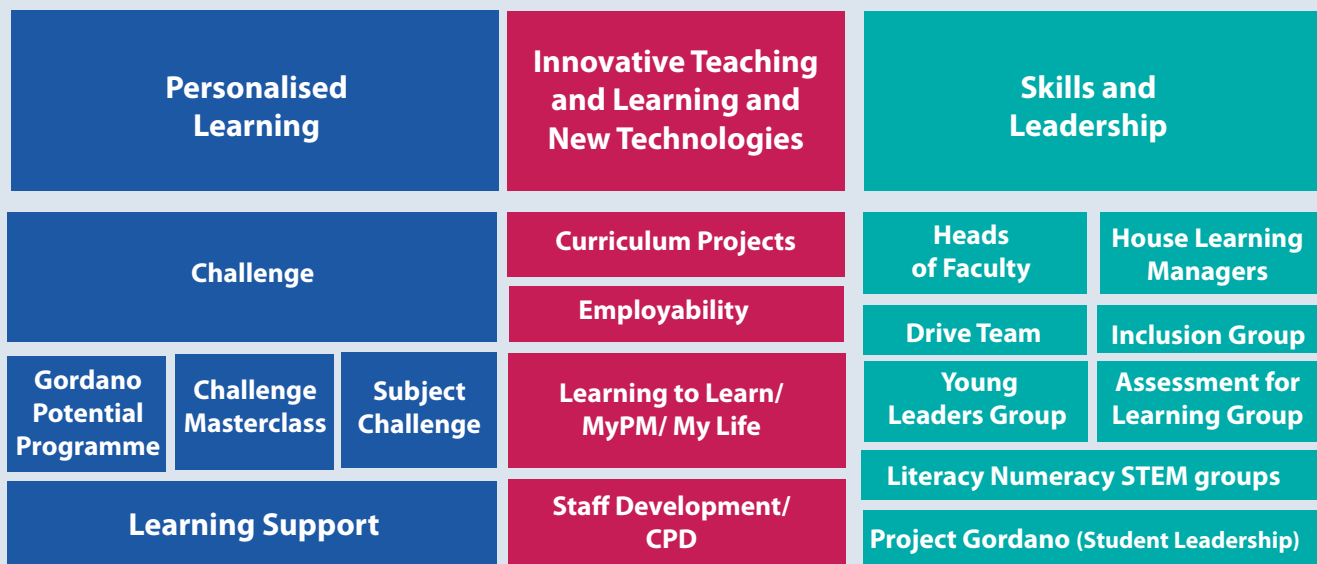
To reflect the school's changing needs, the Development Plan's Vision for 2015 has been amended for 2013-14 to focus on developing the 'whole person', including increased extra curricular activities. There will also be ongoing work at developing independence and the learner profile and on the use of technologies in learning. Leading Edge work will, therefore, also have a shift in focus in 2013-14.



# Areas of Recognition 2010-2013

Leading Edge  
Training School  
Lead School for Gifted and Talented  
Technology College

**Skills for Life**  
**Effort, Independence, Personal Learning Thinking Skills**



**Consolidation, Consistency and Challenge**  
**Insight: Regular, transparent and ongoing self evaluation**

**Sharing and celebrating best practice within and outside of Gordano**

**Learning Exchange**  
North Somerset Leading Learning Networks  
(Aspire, English, Science, MfL)

**Learning Hub Programme**  
Clevedon and local primaries

**Challenge Workshops**  
St Peter's and other local primaries

As the diagram above shows, the skills agenda is threaded through everything we do, with the Effort and Independent Learning agenda and Personal Learning and Thinking Skills being gradually embedded into curriculum and pastoral provision as well as through enrichment and engagement programmes such as the Potential Programme, work experience and the Games Based Learning project. Our Leading Edge specialism and our status as a Gifted and Talented Lead School and Technology College are used as drivers for the School Development Plan (above), helping to provide personalised pathways and opportunities for our students; innovation in teaching and learning as well as developing both student and staff's skills and leadership.



## Sharing Best Practice

Part of the ethos of the Leading Edge Programme is the importance of sharing and disseminating best practice across schools. As well as hosting numerous visits and leading courses such as the Middle Leaders' course, staff at Gordano have been involved in the following:

**SSAT Leading Outstanding Schools:** Gordano hosted 3 SSAT events for senior leaders from across the country, looking at the drivers towards outstanding, self evaluation, Student Services and performance data and intervention.

**SSAT Leading Change:** Gordano's journey from good to outstanding was published in the Leading Edge Leading Change journal and the next edition will include an article on Independent Learning in the 6th Form.

**Middle Leader Programme:** Gordano's Middle Leader Programme is a well established and widely recognised course that has been running for over ten years. A great number of staff from both Gordano and other schools have completed the course prior to or soon after promotion and we were really pleased to have 16 staff completing the 2012-13 programme from schools across Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and Somerset. An exciting development in 2013-14 is our new collaboration with the University of Bristol, who will be certifying the course as well as providing quality assurance.

**Learning Exchange Leading Learning Networks:** North Somerset's Learning Exchange offers a wide range of CPD opportunities and we are really pleased that staff from Gordano have run the English, Modern Foreign Languages, Science and Aspire networks in 2012-13.

**Olevi OTP and ITP:** In January, five staff from Gordano qualified to be facilitators of the Outstanding and Improving Teacher Programmes. We are looking forward to facilitating these courses to teachers from within Gordano and from further afield next year.



## Gordano Learning Policy

When the Learning Policy was rewritten in 2009, it was given a completely new look and brought together various different policies. The new version of the policy will be published in September 2013 after a year long review. The new policy now includes a summary of key aspects of learning at Gordano as well as a new section 'Skilled for Life,' which replaces the older Language for Learning and combines Personal Learning and Thinking Skills.

All sections have been updated, with additions outlining developments with mindsets, literacy, numeracy and the employability agenda.



## Continuing Professional Development

Much of Gordano's CPD is delivered through the Learning Hub programme, where staff opt in to up to seven twilight sessions on topics such as new technologies, personalised learning, Post 16 learning, research and health and wellbeing. This year, we were delighted that Clevedon school joined the programme as well as many of our local primary schools.

There were two whole school INSET days in 2012-13. The first centred around the idea of Consistency, Consolidation and Challenge, with a focus on outstanding Teaching and Learning. The day was opened with a keynote presentation by Peter Daw, an educational consultant who had conducted research into outstanding schools and published a report To the Next Level. After a whole school session on the Year 11 strategy, staff opted into sessions on outstanding learning and on literacy reading strategies.

The second whole staff INSET looked at developing strategies for challenging more able learners, with a video of student voice being shared with staff as well as the feedback from student focus groups. The day also had opt in sessions for literacy writing skills and a number of the pastoral and support staff had separate training on coaching skills.

Students joining Gordano in the next few years will have learnt to read using phonics and so a phonics expert from a local primary school delivered phonics training for staff supporting students with low literacy levels. We are hoping to develop this cross key stage training in 2013-14.



It has been another busy year for Gordano's Teaching and Learning working parties and in 2012 we began a new Teaching and Learning Newsletter. This is published once every two terms and aims to share best practice, research and developments in each of the following groups:

### **Assessment for Learning**

The AfL party have been working on the Effort and Independence agenda, producing a one page overview of useful strategies for developing independent learning.

### **Drive**

The Drive team moved their focus this year to concentrate on the use of new technologies, including the use of webcams, iPads, online voting systems, using students' own devices, QR codes and Twitter.

### **Inclusion**

The Inclusion group have focused on student voice in 2012-13, conducting focus groups with students about their experiences of lessons and successful revision strategies. The group have also looked at the impact of Pupil Premium funding and discussed successful strategies for closing the gap.

### **Literacy**

The literacy party have led sessions at two INSET days this year, where staff have signed up for the sessions they feel are most relevant for them. Another important development has been the sharing of resources and strategies such as group roles and a new Literacy Mat for use when students are completing extended writing. Each term sees an extended tutor time literacy activity for each year group, focusing on key skills needed by the students.

### **Numeracy**

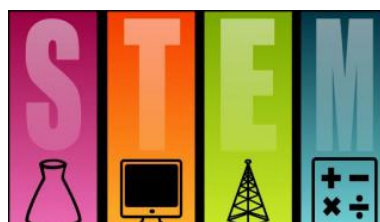
The Numeracy team are made up of representatives from each House to promote the development of whole school numeracy through the pastoral system. There is a fortnightly numeracy challenge in tutor time for each year group and the group's strap line 'Is that a lot?' is now regularly being asked of students.

### **STEM**

There have been numerous STEM subject related opportunities for students throughout the year, supported by STEM representatives.

### **Innovation**

Formerly Young Leaders, the Innovation team have been discussing, amongst other things, after school detentions and staff wellbeing this year.





## Insight – a new system of self evaluation

A major development in 2012-13 has been the review of our self evaluation process. In the past there was a system called Instead, which involved faculties undergoing Ofsted style subject inspections once every two years. Instead saw a Pre Inspection briefing produced by SLT that was responded to by Heads of Faculty and lesson observations being used to evaluate the faculty with a written report being produced. The process was excellent for providing evidence for Ofsted about the quality of Teaching and Learning in the schools, but we wanted to develop the process to further involve middle leaders; make closer links to CPD; involve the whole school at the same time and to make it more regular and more responsive to data whilst retaining accountability.

The new process is called Insight and consists of three strands:

### 1. Faculty Self Evaluation

This is carried out by Heads of Faculty and post holders, with a 'Gardener's Calendar' outlining what self evaluation will be carried out, including lesson observations and learning walks, work scanning and student voice. Evaluations will be recorded and

graded on an online tracking system and areas for development used to inform teacher training.

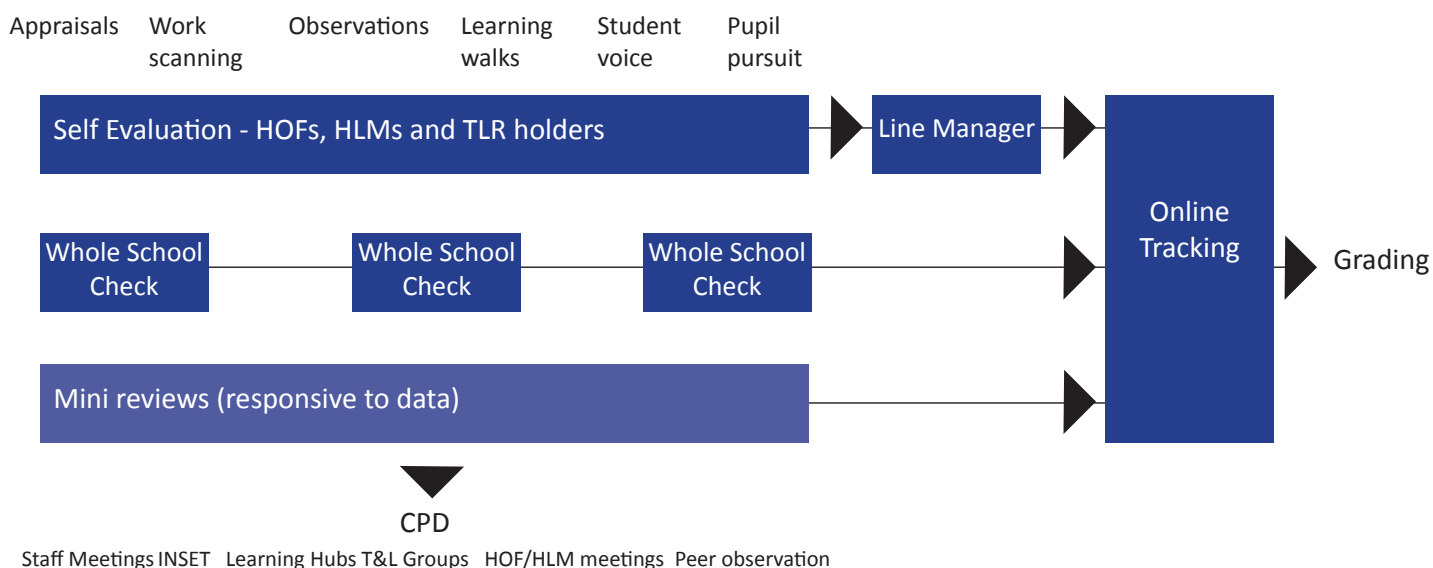
### 2. Whole School Insight (WSI)

This is the newest aspect of our self evaluation, involving the evaluation of three whole school issues through the year, through learning walks, drop ins, lesson observations, work scanning and student voice. Issues and themes for Whole School Insights will be in response to the school's needs, but might include differentiation, literacy, student engagement or behaviour for learning. A report will be produced after each WSI making recommendations for training and findings reported back to staff via staff briefing.

### 3. Mini reviews:

These are traditional subject reviews that will only be carried out in response to falls in data or where concerns have been raised about a subject or upon request. A report will be produced within a week of the review, to be shared and discussed with postholders.

## Insight





## Independent Learning

A whole school focus this year has been on Independent Learning, with a session on the first INSET day considering how to develop independent learning amongst students and Heads of Faculty working on developing Independent Learning Action Plans for the year. Many faculties used teaching triads to look at independent learning strategies being used in classrooms and there were a lot of developments of the use of subject wikis and the Gordano Learning Gateway to encourage independent learning. Subjects such as PE and Dance have also developed the work of their student leaders in leading learning in and out of the classroom and many faculties have updated schemes of learning to more actively involve students in their learning.

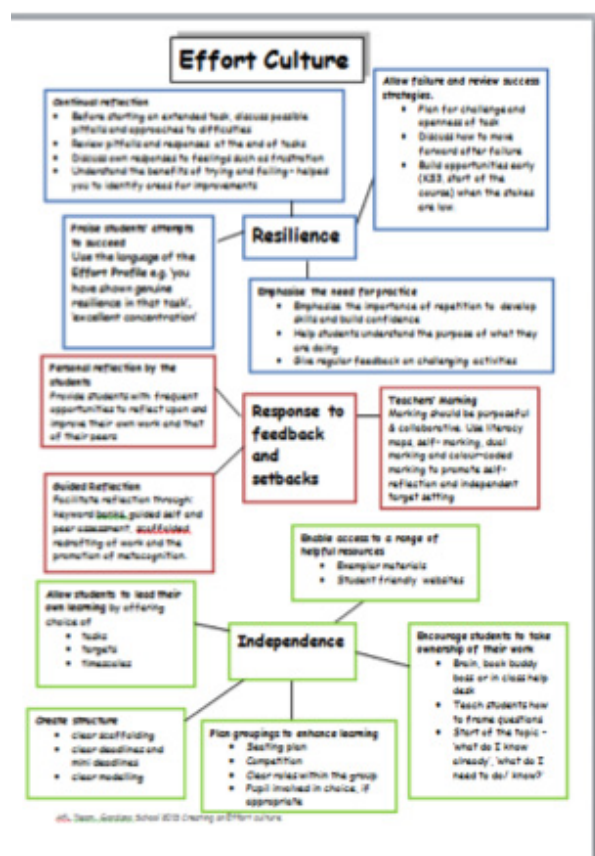
As part of the Independent Learning Agenda, our Advanced Skills Teachers Mrs Claxton and Mr Morris have enhanced our 'Taxonomy of Effort', which outlines what we mean by 'Effort', focusing on the areas of Resilience, Independent Learning and Response to Feedback and Setbacks. Planning is currently underway on how to fully embed this into the pastoral system and opportunities for students to reflect on how far they meet these criteria. We have also created an Independent Learning Strategy, which includes developments such as applications for 6th Form option subjects addressing why students feel they have the necessary skills for studying the subject or ideas for how they will develop these skills.

To support the increased focus on Independence, we have also reviewed our Language for Learning, which used to sit alongside the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills framework. September 2013 will see the introduction of a new Skilled for Life diagram (see earlier), which will be used in MyPM and MyLife programmes as well as being referred to by teachers.

In Term 6, the AfL group have developed a quick guide mind map to support creating an effort culture in our learners. This developed from AfL representatives collating ideas on tools and techniques that are used by teaching staff to develop resilience, positive response to setbacks and feedback along with encouraging independence. The thoughts were distilled and key themes drawn out such as the use of student reflection on learning.

By changing the emphasis in the classroom reflection can be used to develop the different facets of what we perceive effort to be. For instance by reflecting with students at the start of a task to consider possible pitfalls and how they can approach any difficulties may help them build more resilience to their learning. Scaffolding ways to self or peer assess their work and others could help students to develop a greater readiness to engage with and act on feedback.

This document was available to teachers in the recent Insight on Independence and will have hyperlinks developed to expand on various tools and techniques should they be needed.





## Developing a Formal Submission Process in A Level English

Dan Skirrow

### Aims

- To promote student independence and initiative as a core value of the English department
- To create an experience representative of processes students will encounter in further education

This year in English, we asked students to submit their coursework modules at Key Stage 5 to the Sixth Form Office and sign off to indicate that the work had been handed in. We felt that in previous years there had been too much emphasis on teachers chasing students and we wanted to create a fairer set of deadlines for all the students enrolled in our courses, as well as giving them an experience of what submitting work at university might be like!

As a result of this, we've found in department that we've done much less chasing of individuals, and that students were more engaged with the requirements of the coursework modules. We've also seen improvements in the percentage of A/A\* grades awarded in our coursework modules this year. We also had positive feedback from the students themselves, with many of them reporting that it "challenged them" or made them more "independent". In summary, we thought it was a successful strategy that helped our students to become more independent.

## Collaborative planning in Humanities

Dan Eastwood

Leading Edge purchased 15 large whiteboards for Humanities 6th form students in particular to use whilst taking notes and creating group plans. The boards fit onto classroom desks and students have responded really well to using whiteboard pens on them to record their ideas. The boards can then be photographed for students to use for revision and essays.

## Exploring culture with face painting

Dawn Garge

Leading Edge funded sets of face paints for an Art Scheme of Learning where students looked at different cultural approaches to body art and body decoration. Classes explored many different examples including ceremonial headdresses from Nepal, tattoos from Africa/Europe, and Oriental face painting. The students were then asked to draw 4 face painting designs inspired by Peking opera masks for their homework. In the following lesson students painted their favourite design on fellow classmates. It's exciting to add this new dimension to students' experience in Art.

Additionally in Art this year was a workshop for A level Art students delivered by Gary Embury, Senior Lecturer in Illustration at UWE and a Graduate student to promote creative thinking and visualising at a Degree level.





## Gordano Dance Academy

Kirsty Lloyd



In September 2012, the Gordano Dance Academy was established and this has offered greater opportunities for dancers in the school. The academy is split in to two strands:

1. Training academy: lower level (usually year 7/8/9)
2. Company: higher level (usually year 10/11/12/13)

The purpose of the academy is to be inclusive, yet offer room for development, progression and challenge to be the best dancers that they can be. There is a strong emphasis on performing and there have been many performances in assemblies, celebrations, open evening and the Dance Showcase to which the dancers fantastically presented their skills and hard work.

The training academy is led by the Dance Captains; Sarah Stone, Rebecca Osborne, Georgia Hulls and Lauren Hampton, all of whom are talented dancers and have choreographed and taught dances this year which have inspired the lower school. The company dancers are taught by Kirsty Lloyd and already they have a range of dance styles and pieces in their repertoire to which have been performed in many school productions as well as recently featuring in the Tyntesfield WWII weekend, performing a Charleston inspired dance and teaching the audience a few of the Charleston moves!

The students involved in the academy are so enthusiastic and feel like they are part of a dance community. This was helped by ordering hoodies with the dance academy logo and their names on the back. The benefit to the younger students is primarily their confidence – especially year 7 as they are new to the school. Whereas, the benefits for the older students steer more towards challenge and enhancing leadership skills which is showcased through their role as Dance Captains and their membership as a 'Company' dancer.





### Employability

Alison Wood and Careers/ Emily Stephens and MyLife

After discussions about how to develop employability skills amongst students in the personalised Stage in 2011-12, 2012-13 has seen a number of developments, such as employability activities being mapped through MyLife and MyPm and curriculum based time. This year the programme included subject based careers talks for Year 10 and financial education for Year 11. Other developments include:

#### *Employability assemblies linking school with work*

A Job Application /Interview Programme in Year 10 with Business Links conducting the interviews. Four sessions of interviews were conducted with 20 people coming in to school each session to interview the students. Those interviewing included: Police Community Support Officers, GSPA colleagues, Governors and 70 business links.

There were also careers workshops run by Business Links in Year 9 MyLife. 16 business partners ran workshops presenting information about their industry and answering students' questions.

#### *Internships for Y12 students*

We are currently recruiting local businesses to offer 3 – 4 week Internships for students during the summer break. There is a trend with some of the links offering un-paid as opposed to paid internships. We are currently talking to Resource Solutions Group, Lloyds Bank, Saunderson PLC, Sainsburys, Interserve, Miller Construction, Burleigh Press and Pace Print.

#### *Business Breakfasts*

Our two events this year attracted 51 employers. The CEO of Resolutions Solution Group Mike Beesley spoke at the first breakfast about the way his company has tackled the recession and the importance of working with schools to invest in the future. At the second breakfast Burleigh Portishead shared their strategic journey to become an environmentally friendly company which led to a lively debate with the audience. Gill Carter from the South –West Local Enterprise Partnership also came to introduce the employer's aspect of the Employability Charter Mark which Gordano are signed up to for the next academic year which prompted a lot of interest from those present. We now have over 200 businesses partners who are e-mailed about the many opportunities available to them to engage with Gordano School.

#### *Careers Education Advice and Guidance*

The CEAG delivery at Gordano School is now mapped alongside the Employability activities linking it in with the Employability Award and the work of the Business Partnership. A group of 30 Y10 students are due to attend the Skills South –West event at UWE in March where they will attend workshops and events looking at vocational careers in the region.



### Lunchtime Lectures

Beth Davis and 6th Form

As part of a Lunchtime Lecture programme starting in sixth form, entitled the Interval, the first 6 sessions took place in Term 6, mainly based on Key Life Skills that are relevant for our post 16 students and geared to informing and empowering them to make that move from school through to adult life. The first six sessions are listed below, and we also have a loyalty scheme running for all sessions and also each individual talk where the students who turn up become members of that Interval Group and as such have access to privileged information / resources.

- Student Cooking – More than just Pot Noodle
- Planning to Travel
- Alumni with Future First
- Work Experience during Gap Years
- Student Loans with Financial consultant
- Renting and Buying

The Interval sessions will continue throughout the Autumn, with a large variety of speakers and workshops some inspirational and some informative. These will be on Thursday lunchtimes during this term and we are always on the lookout for hidden expertise from the Gordano Staff.



### Languages Visits and Exchanges

Alice Howell, Chris Pugh, Julie Zinkant

#### Aims

We have had big developments this year in our vision to give as many students as possible the chance to put their language skills into practice in France, Germany and Spain. Our overall aim is to provide progression in the linguistic demands and levels of independence required from students. This was broken down as opportunities for:

- Enhanced language acquisition
- Developing communication skills
- Improving inter-cultural understanding
- Increased confidence and independence
- Developing enterprise skills (see below)

We have run residential visits to France, Germany and Spain in Year 8 and for Sixth Form groups for many years, but wanted to provide further opportunities for students in the Personalised Stage of Years 9-11, who may or may not have previously had the experience of a residential trip abroad – we wanted to open students' minds to foreign travel, to step out of their comfort zone and learn that risk-taking is an essential part of life.

#### 1. Christmas Markets Visits

We started by running day trips to Christmas Markets in Lille, France and Aachen, Germany, in December, with 90 students in Years 9, 10 and 11 – these students were from the full ability range and included students with physical and learning special educational needs who had not been abroad at all previously. These were long and quite physically demanding trips with two nights of coach travel with most of a day outdoors on foot – it is always satisfying to see students still smiling and talking excitedly, even when they are nearing exhaustion, about how they managed to speak to a real French or German person

#### 2. Student Exchanges – France and Spain

Secondly, we have built on the Comenius project which ran in 2012 by developing links with partner schools in France and Germany and also with a Spanish school in Mallorca. 20 students in Year 10 signed up for the new exchange programme and the French and Spanish students completed both legs of the exchange in February and April, staying with host families for 5 days. Here at Gordano School, we organised a number of events for all students



from France, Germany and Spain with their English partners in order for them to mix together, including a European Awareness workshop, barn dance and inter-cultural quiz.

Clearly the opportunity to use and absorb the language that students learn in the classroom is a key benefit, along with the chance to experience first-hand the culture of a foreign culture. A number of students have formed potentially life-long friendships and the French and Spanish students have already arranged further stays with each other in their families.

#### 3. Comenius Project and Exchange - Germany

Additional to the exchange programme is a 2-year project funded by the European Union's Comenius Fund for Lifelong Learning. In the first leg, 23 students from Years 9 and 10 welcomed their partners into their homes in February and will be travelling to Stuttgart in September for the return leg.

The Comenius Project was devised by Julie Zinkant in Gordano School in partnership with the German school, and full details can be seen on our project website at [www.gettingconnectedineurope.pbworks.com/](http://www.gettingconnectedineurope.pbworks.com/). The project had 4 key strands:

- Employability
- Languages
- Communication
- Enterprise



We completed project work in both schools before the first visit, where students investigated how communication has changed over the past two generations and the benefits and pitfalls of new technologies for communication.

When our German partners were here, we ran a programme of workshops which included communication games, collaborative project work, business simulation tasks, and mock job interviews with local businessmen and women. Students investigated what it means to be enterprising, using Gordano School's definition of enterprise:

- Risk taking
- Showing initiative
- Being willing to undertake new ventures
- Thinking creatively
- Asking questions
- Coming up with new ideas
- Solving problems

Benefits to students/ the school

The intention is that these visits and exchanges will become a rolling annual programme. The second phase of the Comenius Project is already being planned, and will continue into a student exchange programme, and we will also be looking at how we can develop students' understanding of the benefits of participating in these programmes in terms of the skills they are developing. In other words, we want to students to be more self-aware and to understand the enterprise and employability and enterprise skills that they are developing.

Perhaps the biggest benefit is that the profile of languages and of foreign travel is raised across the whole school community. Whilst parents and students often hear in the media about the importance of language and communication skills in the workplace and of the likelihood of increased mobility during the courses of their lives, it is only when they see this first hand, whether through participating in the programme themselves or by seeing foreign visitors in school, that the messages start to hit home.

### **Relaxation**

Tamzin Brain

Relaxation sessions have been offered to students who feel anxiety or who may be stressed by the pressure of exams or homework. The aim is to help many of our more anxious students to reduce their stress and anxiety levels to a more manageable and controllable level, and to turn counterproductive experiences of stress into a more positive, helpful experience. It introduced transferable visualisation and relaxation techniques to help students feel calm and relaxed before and during their exams; perform to the best of their ability; and work towards their academic goals in a confident manner.

The aims of the relaxation sessions are to:

- Calm the nervous system, boost the immune system and improve sleep.
- Sharpen concentration and clarity, improve memory and recall and calm the mind.
- Promote positive thinking and improve emotional wellbeing.
- Reduce stress, tension and anxiety.
- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Aid anger management, emotional regulation, and self-control.
- Promote and encourages empathy and listening skills.

### **Games based learning**

The Games based Learning project has now been running for three years, aiming to help close the gap in attainment between Year 8 students. Students work on their team work, confidence and communication skills through a series of sessions where they research and create a literacy game that is then taken to primary schools to be trailed. This year, the project has been extended to involve the creation of starter activities to be used in school, for faculties to use in lessons.



### Aspirations Project

Sally Kingscott

The Aspirations groups have been very successful this year; the pupils have all thoroughly enjoyed the course and have readily embraced all the challenges that they have been given throughout the course of the year.

They have taken part in First Aid training and visited the following venues:

- Tyntesfield Estate – Clearing out ponds and woodland
- Noah's Ark – Animal care
- McDonalds and Homebase in Portishead – looking at careers in the retail industry.
- Weston College – Pupils have three visits to the college to have a look at all the campuses and to try taster sessions in animal care, catering, motor vehicle maintenance, construction, business and marketing.
- The Mounted Police Unit in Bristol and a talk from Local PCSO's about their roles.
- Farmlink – Visiting local farms and looking at jobs within the farming industry.
- Redwood Hotel – looking at jobs within the hospitality industry.
- Puxton Park – Farm work, learning about animal care and crop rotation.

The pupils have been working on a number of skills over the year including:

- Thinking skills
- Independent enquirers
- Team working
- Social skills
- Self management

As a result of taking part in the course the pupils have been able to look at a range of different working environments and college courses and have met employers and college lecturers. They are now more aware of the opportunities that will be open to them when they leave Gordano and the skills and qualifications that they will need.





## Challenge Programme

As a Lead School for Gifted and Talented, we are constantly looking at how to develop our provision for our more able students as well as part of our work at developing an aspirational culture for all students.

## Masterclass programme

The masterclass programme has been running for over six years now at Gordano, with a timetable being published in the first term of each year and students are able to sign up online via the Gordano Learning Gateway. Masterclasses this year have included a Rat Dissection; a series of 3 sessions on Presentation Skills; Trestle Masks in Drama; Beyond Sudoku; Doing Voluntary Service Overseas; Journalism; Fractals; Using Apple Macs; Ballet; Creative Writing; Exploring your Brain; We all Scream for Ice Cream and Using I Movie.

The following are student reflections

*Doing Voluntary Service Overseas:* I found this masterclass inspiring as volunteering overseas seems like hard but rewarding work. I've always wanted to have a gap year and travel and now feel like this could be possible and a good idea for me. This masterclass also gave me an insight into what the work and conditions can be like but also highlights of the trip which makes me want to experience this first hand! I really appreciate how life differs in different countries and think people such as Mr. Wilson who did the masterclass are brave to take on a challenge like this for two years.

*Drama Trestle Mask:* I hadn't done any drama work for years so it was a struggle for me to remember how to act. The masks were something new and I had to adapt to the style of acting. This course reminded me that I can still do drama and I think the activity helped me overcome stage fright.

*Develop your Presentation Skills:* I really enjoyed this first presentation masterclass- it was very interesting and I felt I got a lot out of it. I loved the fact that we were learning such interesting things in such a relaxed environment. We looked at a few videos on YouTube to give us ideas which I liked. We then got into pairs with someone else who we didn't know and we talked about ourselves. We then had to present 'them' to the rest of the class- putting what we'd learnt into practise. Overall I think that it was a great masterclass and I'm looking forward to the next two.

## Science cafes

We have run the Science Café programme at Gordano now for three years, and are very grateful to the lecturers and students from the University of Bristol for delivering the 20 minute talks and leading the question and answer sessions that follow a refreshment break. This year's seen cafes on: Synthetic Biology; Sustainability, Health and Me; Community Ecology; Applying Scientific methods to medicine; Animal Welfare and Behaviour and Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases of humans.

The following reflections by students give a taster of the sessions:

*Sustainability, Health and Me:* This science café was a good reminder of how global warming will affect our planet and our environment, as well as teaching how it will affect our social ordering. We learnt methods of how to help combat these affects in the future, and was handy to find out about the possibilities of a medical career in the future. We had to be creative thinkers during a quiz section to accurately estimate the answers.

*Synthetic Biology:* I found the most interesting part of the event to be the session at the end, where we were asked to give our own thoughts on multiple aspects of Synthetic Biology. The diverse range of opinions; ranging from full support of genetically modified foods to those opposing it, considering ecological and environmental impacts to outweigh benefits, shows to me that the lecturer was successful in giving an unbiased view.

Teamwork and critical thinking was needed to complete one of the tasks during the session, in which we formed our own governments representing different approaches to the regulation of Synthetic Biology.

## Year 11 Aspire

The Year 11 Aspire Programme is designed to support our more able Year 11 students who have the potential to achieve A and A\* at GCSE. It is personalised to students' needs and runs during Friday tutor times, with introductory sessions involving a range of activities designed to motivate students and raise aspirations and subsequent sessions delivered by subject specialists and cover subject specific advice on how to achieve A\*.



### Year 11 Learning Visits

Rebecca Grist and David Hunt

The Learning visits scheme is designed to help students interested in careers in Medicine, Veterinary Science, Law, Architecture and Engineering to meet other like-minded peers with similar aspirations and to provide visits to work placements of interest. It involves meetings that include:

- Discussions about requirements for entry into different Universities (Grades, skills, work experience and personal attributes),
- Discussions about questions that students have that you would like to ask during learning visits,
- Planning and preparation for visits,
- Meetings with previous year group students who attended visits and are now applying to University,
- A meeting to feedback experiences.

The programme concludes with a visit to a place of work where students can further investigate their chosen career path.

Student Feedback includes:

- 'It really gave me a good idea of what architects do and what their relationships with their clients are like'
- 'Overall, it was a great day and extremely useful. If I hadn't had the opportunity, I would have missed out on a lot of valuable information.'
- 'Really good to have the views and opinions of other people on their work experience and also the opportunities for everyone to share their thoughts on good placement'
- 'It was good to have a mix of students older than me who were also interested in Veterinary Science so that I could see how much work experience they had completed'

### Potential Programme

The Potential Programme has now run for three years, and aims to inspire and support our highest achieving and most hardworking students to progress into the most competitive destinations in their chosen field. By joining the Programme, students are provided with extra support and guidance to enable them to develop qualities and skills necessary for acceptance into some of the top destinations and courses in Higher Education.

The programme involves a series of sessions throughout the year where students develop key skills, either working in cross-year group 'Families' or in year groups and a Challenge Day in Term 3. Students also meet once a fortnight to reflect on opportunities and discuss year group specific issues. New sessions for 2012-13 included greater focus on leadership, resilience and exam skills and evaluations of UCAS and job applications.

A key change to the programme from September 2012 is that students can now only graduate to the next year if they show real commitment and effort. Students who don't meet the criteria are asked to re-apply, completing an application form that reflects on their skills and ambitions, which is also completed by any student interested in joining the programme. Additionally, we have changed the criteria for who we invite onto the programme to take into account students' effort scores in their progress checks so additional students are now included who may once have been missed because of their attainment levels.

The Challenge Day was based around challenging students' preconceptions about subjects and making links across subjects and students completed an activity where they analysed their team work/ leadership style in order to set targets for themselves about how to work in the day. They were then working in subject groups to create a 5 minute presentation where they would teach key skills about their subject to groups of students who identified their subject as one they may be more closed minded about. In addition to this, a motivational speaker, Emily Cummins, presented about the design work she has done leading her to be awarded with numerous prizes such as Woman of the Year and how the effort she put in at school helped to pave the way for her exciting career.

*Students' reflections:*

We were put into subject groups, but this time it was groups that we'd chosen so this meant that we were studying the subject that we were interested in, and we had to research into it and show why we thought it was a good subject. We had to start by mindmapping everything that is related to that subject and we put this on our display. We then had to give a short presentation about our subject and why it is important. We also had a inspirational presentation from designer



Emily Cummins about her inventions and her background. It was a good session because not only did we work in a subject that we were happy with and got to tell others why we liked it, but we also learnt about the subjects we didn't like so much and why they are important.

...

I really enjoyed this day and thought it was really interesting to not only get to work on the subject we were most interested in, but also to have our preconceptions of other subjects challenged. The fact that we got to say why we struggle with a certain subject was good as we don't usually get the chance to do this. I enjoyed working with my languages group to try and persuade people that languages are great as not everyone thinks so! Also, the talk from Emily was really inspiring, especially seeing as she herself was still at school when she started inventing and the really positive impact that her products had.

...

My favourite part of the day was seeing Emily Cummins. She really inspired me to do something I love and have a passion about. My group decided to do Agriculture in Geography and we all found it really interesting about the conservation techniques and how much we need farmers.

I enjoyed working in my group and I got on really well with all the people in my group. The presentation went really well and I learnt about presenting, which I wasn't really a fan of because I get really nervous. But I overcame my nerves and it went really well.

One of the Year 9 Potential Challenges was for students to enter a Shape your future competition, run by the Department for International Development. All Year 9 Potential students engaged with the competition, working on proposals for post 2015 Development Goals. After entering a team, we were delighted that five Gordano students were commended by the Secretary of State for International Development for their imaginative proposals for improving the housing situation in developing countries.

Abi Harrison, Eve D'Arcy, Jessica Cross, Ellie Burrows and Chloe Davis proposed that the Department for International Development support the expansion of bottle-brick technology, which involves using waste plastic bottles filled with earth as eco-bricks for the construction of low-cost, safe, new homes. The Gordano students submitted their proposals to the DFID following independent research into existing projects and an email exchange with a journalist in Nigeria.

The Gordano entry was judged to have been of "an exceptionally high standard" and although it did not win the top award, it was singled out as worthy of commendation. The school was informed of this by Karen Barnes Programme Director of the Global Learning Programme, who said "In recognition of the quality of your entry, I am delighted to inform you that the Secretary of State for International Development, Rt. Hon. Justine Greening, has decided to award your school a certificate of commendation. We will arrange for this to be forwarded to you as soon as it has been signed."

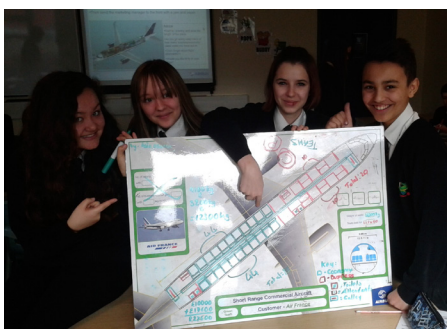
### Primary Workshops

2012-13 saw the second year of Gifted and Talented workshops run for Key Stage 2 students from our local primaries. The partnership is organised by Gordano and St Peter's Primary School, with afternoon sessions on a range of subjects, such as Art, Literacy and Maths. The sessions are either run by teachers from Gordano or, as in the case of the Literacy Day, by our students, where the Year 7 BBC School Reporters ran a day with Year 5 and 6 students creating a news broadcast about the picture book Hurricane.



## Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Challenge Opportunities

- *Biology Olympiad*: The British Biology Olympiad challenges and stimulates students with an interest in Biology to expand and extend their talents. In offering a wider syllabus than A-level, it allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and to be suitably rewarded and publicly recognised by the award of medals, certificates and other prizes. It is hoped that competing in the Olympiad will encourage students already interested in this valuable, wide-ranging and rewarding subject to continue their study beyond A-level.
- *Biology Week*: A week celebrating and developing Biology in the school, including a world record attempt, dissection work shops, Biology quizzes and pond sampling. (Helen Griffin)
- *Chemistry Challenge*: Completed by AS Chemistry students, which involved completing rigorous monthly on-line assessments, competing with other students worldwide. We're delighted that one student was awarded a silver and one a bronze award (which are awarded to just 13.5 and 37.4% of entrants respectively). (Deri Phillips)
- *Academy Excellence Awards* which saw students producing extended writing on controversial topics in Science. Two of this year's entries were about "The Value of Blue Sky Research" and the development of pharmaceuticals. (Owain Hutchings)
- *STEM cast* Scientific film competition and Skirting for Science
- *Go4Set* is a project set up by Airbus and backed by Prince Charles, where the 13 Year 9 girls will come out as industrial cadets - the first group in the South West! (Shan Stock)
- *Airbus*: A 2 hour session was run by employees from Airbus with Year 9 Maths students as part of the STEM fortnight. Students had to design an interior of an aircraft and developed skills such as planning, scale drawing and budgeting. (Greg Brown)



- *AeroClub*: The GSPA has helped to fund a club that serves as a fun introduction to Aeronautical engineering, where students build flying models from plans, using balsa and tissue. The club aims to develop patience and eye-hand coordination/ motor control as well as fine making skills and the chance to learn to interpret drawings. The pace is student driven with an informal sense of healthy competition, with students progressing from basic designs up to more complicated scale models. Future plans include entry to national competition, possibly Indoor Nationals held at Nottingham University in April. (Richard Moore)



- *Young chef*: Gordano once again entered students into this competition, held at St Katherine's The Leaf restaurant.
- *Awkwright Trust Engineering Scholarships*: We were delighted to have a number of students successfully go through the application process to receive scholarships on this programme for 2013. The students worked with Paul Wilson in their own time to write applications, take aptitude tests and be interviewed for the scholarships.



### A-Level English Language Study Day: What is Bristolian?

#### Aims

- To engage students with what the study of English Language involves in further education, and highlight its viability as a career option
- To encourage research on accent and dialect as a potential topic for their forthcoming language projects
- To explore attitudes towards accent and dialect as part of revision for their AS exams

Year 12 English Language students were invited to attend a whole day workshop exploring the development and perception of the Bristolian accent and dialect at the M-shed in the centre of Bristol. Students had the opportunity to work with a number of academics from the University of Bristol, as well as hearing a keynote speech from Peter Trudgill, widely acknowledged as one of the forefathers of sociolinguistics. They also had the chance to work with other A-Level English Language students from across the city and explore the museum's own collection and representation of the Bristolian dialect. Students enjoyed the opportunity to explore the English language in action outside of the classroom and in the "real world", and a "gert lush" day was had by all.

### Springhead Creative Writing Visit

#### Aims

- To allow students to explore and pursue their interests in creative writing
- To develop students' confidence in sharing and receiving feedback on their creative writing

Our annual residential trip to North Dorset was again a success this year, with students encouraged to create and revise a wide range of pieces over the course of a weekend in the beautiful settings and gardens of the Springhead trust. Students took part in a number of creative writing exercises inspired by the surrounding nature and their experiences in the neighbouring village of Fontmell Magna, producing and sharing work in many different forms.

### Carnegie Shadowing Group

Rachel Starling

#### Aims

- To raise the profile of reading and 'teen fiction' within the school.
- To encourage enthusiastic and talented readers to read an array of challenging texts from different genres.
- To take part in a national process of selecting a winning novel from the Carnegie Medal Shortlist.

#### Outline of project

The Carnegie Medal is awarded each year to an out-standing teenage novel through an intensive judging process. The Carnegie Shadowing Group is a national initiative, designed to get small groups of students reading the shortlist and deciding on the winning novel over a period of 8 weeks.





The group meets weekly to swap books and exchange views on the texts they've already encountered. They're also responsible for maintaining our 'reading blog' on the official Carnegie website, posting reviews, blog posts and polls showing their engagement with the texts.

The project will culminate in a 'Carnegie Day' where the students will convene to decide on the winning novel and undertake a number of activities to reflect on the texts they've read. They will also present the winning novel and explain their decisions to the head teacher, and decide on an outcome that shares the results of the Carnegie Shadowing Group with the rest of the school. Following this, they will hold an assembly for year 7 students to present some of their views and opinions of the scheme, and encourage participation in next year's event.

### Benefits to students

The students benefit from the Shadowing Group in many ways; they're developing their English skills by reading challenging texts and for many of the readers, the texts chosen will push them out of their 'comfort zone' and invite them to explore new and unfamiliar genres. The content of a lot of the novels this year helps the students to engage with a wide range of social and political issues, from the capture and torture of British spies during World War 2 to the difficulties experienced by young people who relocate to foreign countries. The students also need to use their ICT skills to present their information effectively, and are gaining skills at debating and listening to the views of others.

### Spelling Bee

The Gordano Spelling Bee is now in its third year at Gordano, with students from Years 7 and 8 competing in lunchtime heats before the final competition after school, where 9 contestants battle it out to become the Gordano Spelling Bee Champion! This year saw an amazing success rate, with Dictionary Corner having to find new words midway the competition due to the students using up all the ones set!



## Project Gordano

Alice Howell

Project Gordano is an exciting initiative which allows all students an opportunity to involve themselves in the processes of implementing changes they would like to see at Gordano. It is an highly inclusive approach to education created by students and staff working together which takes the real life experience of 'school' as a community and offers tools, programme sharing courses and structures to support pupils' involvement in all aspects of their school life and learning. This ultimately works towards positive change. Successful projects to date include the creation and maintaining of the vegetable patch outside the main block as well as the monitoring of staff and pupil energy use at School. We have also recently been awarded funding to buy beanbags for the Elliott Room!



One of our longest running projects is the vegetable patch. Mary Jones (Science) is working closely with the team to provide them expert guidance and support as they grow some tasty treats. This is what she had to say about their journey so far:

"Late April, 2012 saw the building of 4 raised, vegetable beds in a very prominent position within the school grounds. Some members of staff and the GSPA donated second hand tools and equipment for a group of Student Leadership pupils to get started on these new plots. The small team began raising seeds and the planting of potatoes saw the first bed quickly

established. By September there was a riot of colour provided by three foot tall Cosmos plants, there was also a bountiful supply of runner beans and potatoes along with a few large marrows. The entrepreneurial spirit of the students then took over and the produce was sold to members of staff to provide monies for future planting.

This spring, spurred on by their initial success, the students have dug over the beds and planted a greater variety of vegetables; they have sold their excess seedlings and raised further monies which they plan to put towards a garden shed. The students have learnt from their experiences and have already realised that during the winter months they need to plan what they are going to grow and where they are planting it and to follow a crop rotation scheme. The high profile positioning of the vegetable beds make for a great talking point, staff stop and engage with the students whilst they are working, and the students feel that the project and their successes are highly visible to both staff and students alike thus promoting confidence and self-esteem throughout the team.

The next plan for the Gardening Team is to launch a gardening club where they can lead and inspire others to get growing."



Project Gordano is always looking to recruit more pupils to continue working on many more exciting projects. If you are interested in becoming involved (either as a member of staff or as a pupil) or would like to know more about the various projects, please contact Alice Howell for further information.



Developing innovative use of new technologies will continue to be an area of focus in 2013-14, but a number of moves have been made this year to embed technology more fully into life at Gordano.

*Icaris:* After a trial in the summer of 2012, Gordano moved to an online system of monitoring and recording rewards and sanctions. The new system allows teachers to enter any rewards and sanctions online, which sends any actions home to parents via email and allows more instant and effective monitoring.

*GCSE Pod:* In September 2012, Gordano subscribed to the online service of GCSE Pod for Year 10-11 students, which provides subject specific revision podcasts for students to either watch online or download that can be searched by exam board and individual exams. The new service was introduced by students, to students in Learning to Learn sessions and assemblies, with time being given for the students to create accounts in tutor time. 7060 podcasts have been downloaded this year and we wish the students every luck for results day this summer!

*The Drive Team,* made up of representatives from each faculty, have focused their attentions in 2012-13 to developing the use of new technologies in teaching and learning. Some of the areas being developed are:

- IPads Science have trialled the use of iPads this year, with students using them in lessons to research and to independently develop their learning through the use of various Science focused apps. Due to the success in Science, iPads will also be used in Humanities and PE in 2013-14, with PE being able to develop their use of Dartfish technology, which allows students to record themselves and playback for reflection and evaluation of technique.
- Webcams Webcams have been purchased for a number of faculties to allow teachers to either conduct experiments which can be projected onto the whiteboard or for teachers to model students' work to the rest of the class during the lesson.
- Voting software There have been a number of trials going on in Gordano investigating different online voting systems for instant assessment of students' understanding. Excitingly, these systems are now using students' own devices which has opened up new ways of using technology in the school.
- QR Codes QR codes are being used, particularly by Design Technology, for students to easily access detailed materials, for example on circuit designs, on their own devices. By using a QR code reader on their phones, students are taken to websites and materials that they can then use alongside their practical work. Students have been really engaged with this, especially as by accessing these materials on their phones is 'portable' and easy to use.
- Twitter An increasing amount of subjects and whole school initiatives are now using Twitter to more fully engage students and parents with learning at Gordano. There are links to the Twitter feeds from the News area on Gordano's website and we're excited to see how these accounts will develop next year.

360 Gordano is currently working towards the 360 E Safety Award, with various developments such as an E Safety Committee; an online bullying database used by the pastoral system; software ensuring passwords are changed regularly; student cyber mentor training; further enhancement of our E Safety education and new policies on the use of mobile devices in the school.

*Revision apps* After the successful creation of a German vocabulary revision app by Peter Morris, Drive Team will be looking at how to encourage and enable students to create their own revision apps.

Physics have been looking at various uses of technology in learning, such as Cloudbased software and the use of webcams and the use of the Best choice website too consolidate concepts introduced in lessons; to give all AS and A2 students access to more theoretically demanding aspects of the course and beyond. This should put them in an advantageous position when it comes to completing the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge and RSC Olympiad. The website also enables the Chemistry department to monitor both individual and class progress and to produce in depth data for analysis to inform planning for lessons, focussing on areas for development.



To find out more about any of these projects and initiatives, please email Sophie Francis, Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning

[sfrancis@gordano.n-somerset.sch.uk](mailto:sfrancis@gordano.n-somerset.sch.uk)

