



# Leading Edge Overview 2013-14





It has been another busy year at Gordano and our involvement with Leading Edge has continued to provide opportunities for us to hear best practice from other schools as well as to share work that we are involved in.

Having been a Leading Edge school since 2003, Gordano has seen the programme change a lot, but the focus is still very much about school-led improvement and schools supporting one another to innovate and develop best practice. Many Leading Edge funded initiatives are now embedded into the school's everyday practice, such as Assessment for Learning in classrooms; the use of traffic lighting in data; the Small School we have in our Boost classroom to support Year 7 students' literacy and numeracy skills and various projects designed to raise aspirations and develop students' social and emotional skills. Although schools no longer receive additional Leading Edge funding, Gordano continues to set aside funding for innovation such as this as we fully believe in the power of such 'bottom-up' school improvement.

2013-14 has seen developments in our being designated Teaching School status and are continuing to work closely in our Teaching School Alliance with Backwell School to share research and best practice across the alliance. This is, in part, achieved through our SLEs (Specialist Leaders in Education) who work across schools delivering training and support, most recently training staff in schools in both North Somerset and South Gloucestershire on Growth Mindset and Effort and working with more able students at a school in Gloucestershire. Additionally, we became a SSAT (The Schools Network) Lead School for Able Student Provision in recognition of our work with more able students in subjects and our Challenge and Potential programmes.

Training opportunities for staff have been greatly enhanced by Gordano becoming an accredited centre for delivering the Olevi Outstanding and Improving Teacher Programmes (OTP and ITP), with five members of staff being trained facilitators and we have been able to run three cohorts of OTP and one of ITP. Excitingly for next year, the Deputy Head from St Peter's Primary School will also be facilitating sessions to provide expertise for Primary delegates. Delegates from earlier courses had previously demonstrated the success of these courses and this

year's delegates were no different, with many having improved their lesson observations and some having achieved promotion. Another training development that we've been proud to confirm this year is the accreditation of the Middle Leaders' programme by the University of Bristol, and this course continues to be popular with both Gordano staff and staff from local schools.

A major move forward in staff development this year has been the launch of a whole school Peer Observation Programme to build on the already successful peer observation models in place in faculties. This saw every member of staff work in triads on an area of focus in both their subject area and in another faculty. This will be developed in 2014-15 through linking the peer observation to our new Gordano Excellence in Learning (GEL) Groups, who will be researching areas of Teaching and Learning which will feed directly into Twilight CPD sessions.



### **Gordano Peer Observation Programme 2013-14**

The new self-evaluation process Insight is now fully embedded, with 3 Whole School Insights in 2013-14, looking at: support for vulnerable groups; written feedback and literacy and numeracy. In addition to a written report that is published to staff and governors and made available on our Learning Gateway, Heads of Faculty and/ or House Learning Managers receive a more detailed set of feedback about observations in their respective areas. The results from these whole school reviews have been used to inform planning of CPD for 2014-15 and to Faculty Development Plans.



As we approach the date set for the last 5 year vision, the School Development Plan has once again been updated for the coming school year. 2013-14 had a focus on an 'Outstanding all round education', which supported a concerted focus on extra curricular activities and students reflecting more on their effort and engagement with all aspects of Gordano life. The diagram representing the school's aims for 2014-15 now has the school's strapline as its centre piece: 'Pride, Achievement and Community', which really sums up what we are about as a school and the initiatives and developments outlines in this overview are all steps towards realising these 3 cornerstones of Gordano life. The School Development Plan continues to be used as the rationale behind any Leading Edge project.





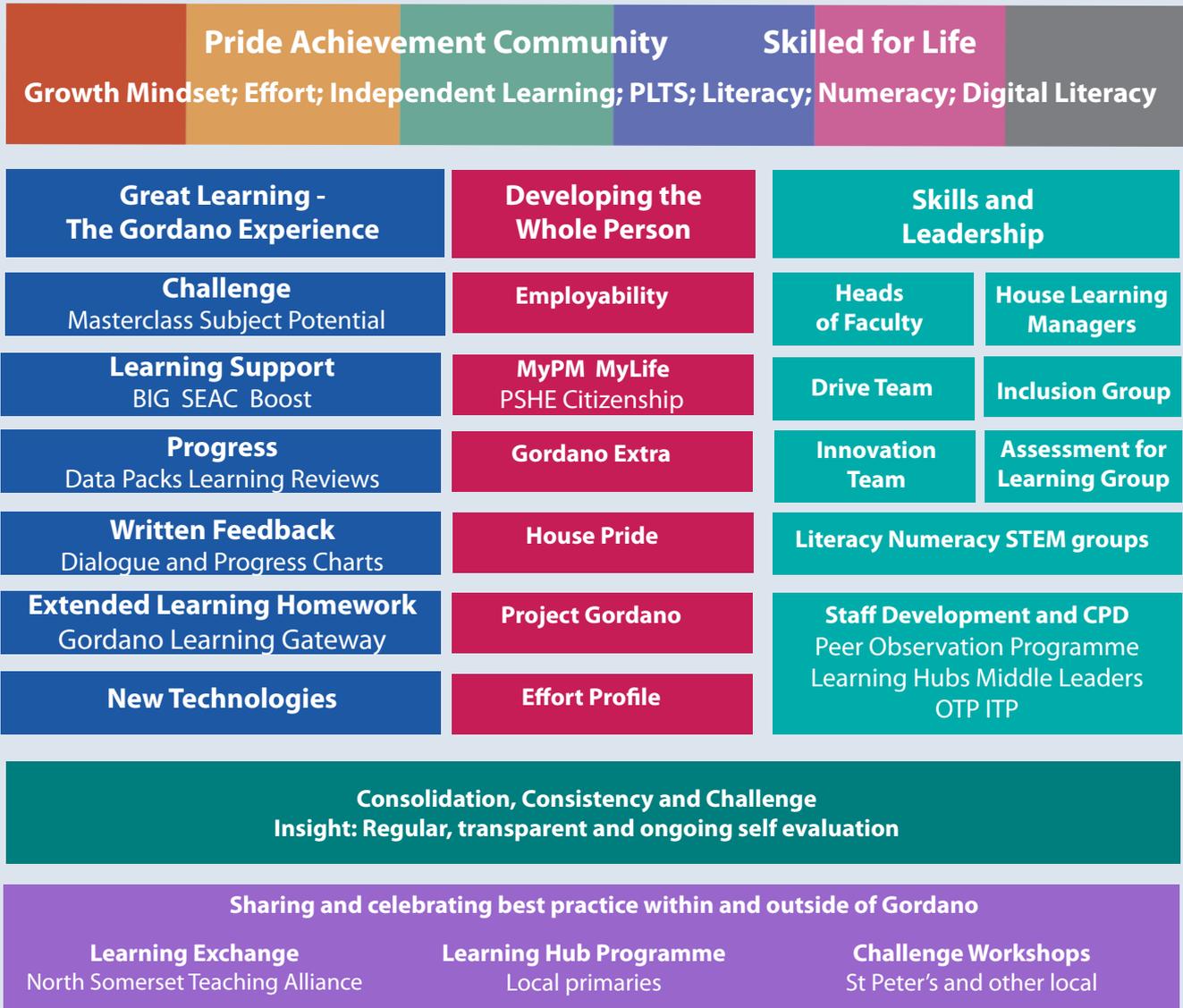
# Areas of Recognition

2008-2012: Training School and Technology College

2008+ Leading Edge

2009+ Lead School for Provision for More Able Students (SSAT)

2013+ Teaching School



As the diagram above shows, the Skilled for Life agenda and Pride Achievement and Community is threaded through everything we do, from Teaching and Learning in the classroom, to enrichment for students and across staff development groups and opportunities. The work started a few years ago on how to develop Growth Mindsets has now developed into an Effort Profile, making 'outstanding' effort and Independent learning more explicit to students and parents. These skills and dispositions are also key to enrichment and development opportunities in the school, such as the work on employability skills and extra curricular opportunities.



The Skilled for Life wheel has been used with students since the start of 2013 and a key area of development next year will be strengthening whole school literacy and numeracy, through both lessons and tutor time activities.

A major aspect of the Skills Wheel in 2013-14 was Independent Learning and developing the use of the Effort Profile with students. In 2014-15, this will be developed further in the Learner Profile - a means for students to reflect on the development of key skills and dispositions such as Growth Mindset, PLTS and Employability skills. This will be trialled as a paper based activity next year, but plans are underway for an

online reflection site for all students. 2014-15 will also see the launch of Gordano Extra – a more coherent offer of extra curricular opportunities and the Gordano Guarantee, the guarantee that all students will have the opportunity to take part in 9 different experiences, such as a residential or visit to an inspiring place.

Another key development for 2014-15 will be the Gordano Experience, a document making clear the expectations for Teaching and Learning to ensure all students and classes have a consistent experience, such as in the feedback they receive and the differentiation in lessons.

## Skilled for Life



# Gordano Guarantee



## 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:

### Leading Edge Publications

Following an article in the Leading Edge magazine 'Leading Change' about Gordano's Teaching and Learning developments since 2008, Sophie Francis presented at the SSAT Leading Edge annual Leadership Conference in London in September 2013. This session led to the exchange of ideas between Gordano and other Leading Edge schools and the conference was where Gary Lewis and Sophie Francis heard about the South Wirral High School's Pledges, which have been used as a starting point for the development of the Gordano Guarantee.

We have also had an article about Independent Learning published in the Leading Change magazine and have plans for publishing about our Peer Observation and Effort profile in the future.

### Sharing Best Practice Events

Leading Edge schools organise a variety of sharing best practice events and in February, Gordano hosted an event for 8 schools looking at provision for more able students. Following the afternoon, many of the schools were in contact with Gordano to discuss the development of their Gifted and Talented programmes in more depth. Gordano Senior and Middle Leaders have also attended various events such as Sharing Best Practice conferences on Teaching Schools, improving progress in Maths, Pupil Premium and Whole School Literacy and Numeracy.

### SSAT Achievement Show

Tom Inman and Sophie Francis attended the SSAT Achievement Show in June 2014, attending various presentations by Outstanding Schools and Departments on a wide range of topics and the ideas from all of these events have been disseminated back at Gordano.



You are here: [Home](#) > [Support](#) > [Achievement](#) > [Leading Edge](#) > Leading Edge conference 2013

# Leading Edge conference 2013

**Leading Edge Leadership conference**

**Thursday 26 September 2013, London**

## Presentations

[Main room presentations](#)

Workshops

[Moving from Good to Outstanding through developing Teaching and Learning](#)

Sophie Francis, Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning, Gordano School

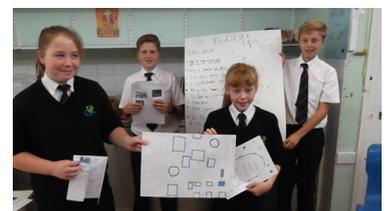
## A broad and rigorous curriculum

### MyPM and MyLife Developments

MyPM and MyLife offer students the opportunity to focus on thinking skills and teamwork at the same time as covering important PSHE and Citizenship topics. MyPM has seen some exciting developments this year, as outlined below, in Vicky Mundy's last year of coordinating the Year 7 and 8 programme before handing the reins to Mike Oxenham who will, from September, be coordinating both the MyPM and MyLife programmes, thereby providing continuity between the two key stages. We'd like to take this opportunity to say well done to Vicky for the seamless running of MyPM and good luck for her new role.

### Employability Skills

Year 8 pupils showed off their business skills in 'MYPM' this year as they worked on promoting a café. As well as designing the layout and décor of their café, pupils used their numeracy abilities to draw up a realistic budget and pricing plan. They then had to present to the teacher in a 'Dragons' Den' style format, with the teacher having the difficult task of deciding whom to invest in! The photographs are of members of 8S1 showing their work to Mrs Keane. Some really inventive ideas here!



### Links with 'Mend the Gap'

Year 8 pupils from 8L are demonstrating their games made from recycled materials. 'MYPM' this year focussed on the school's work with 'Mend the Gap', a charity which aims to help pupils in Kenya with their schooling. Mrs Fairs and sixth formers, who are visiting Kenya this July, came to talk to year 8 pupils about this work and pupils were set the task of making 'something out of nothing'. Using only materials that would otherwise be thrown away, pupils planned, made, played and evaluated games; practising their skills of teamwork and creativity. Thanks to Miss Horton for providing the photos and Mrs Fairs and the sixth formers for giving up their time to talk to year 8!

### Gordano Skills Wheel

Using the Gordano Skills Wheel as inspiration, pupils in year 7 and 8 this year have shown their creativity and communication skills in writing poetry; making an animation; composing music in an Indonesian or Caribbean style; leading in sports activities; making newspapers; dancing the capoeira and using presentation skills to teach their classmates about '8-way Thinking' and countries around the world. It's been another active year for our younger pupils on Wednesday afternoons!





It has been another busy year for Gordano's Teaching and Learning working parties and the work of the groups is published every other term in the Teaching and Learning Newsletter. Next year sees the formation of new Gordano Excellence in Learning Groups, which will build on the positive work of the working parties.

### Assessment for Learning

The AfL party have focused on how to provide effective written feedback this year and have provided the teaching staff with some really useful resources in preparation for and in response to the Whole School Insight looking at Written Feedback. Resources include an overview of different methods of providing effective feedback and creating a dialogue with students, including visuals of examples of these methods. The team also created a document showing how different faculties are making students engage with written feedback, which will be disseminated further in September 2014. The party had a rolling chair this year to develop leadership and management skills of the members.

### Drive

The Drive team continued their focus on the use of new technologies,

with each faculty taking a different project, including the use of webcams, iPads, online voting systems, using students' own devices, QR codes, blogs and Twitter.

### Inclusion

The Inclusion group have focused on the impact of Pupil Premium funding and discussed successful strategies for closing the gap.

### Numeracy

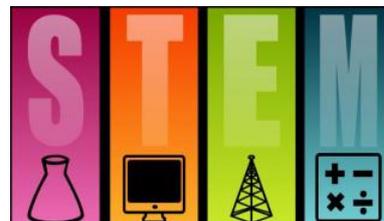
The Numeracy team are made up of representatives from each House to promote the development of whole school numeracy through the pastoral system. The team produced resources to support the Whole School Literacy and Numeracy Insight and are working on Numeracy Banners for display in faculty areas.

### 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, communication to staff this year.





## STEM 2013-14

A number of STEM based extra curricular clubs continue to thrive with regular attenders of the Science Club, Aero Club, Maths Games Club and Textiles club

- This year we have 2 students (Chris Morris and Rob March) whose journey through the 6th form has been made easier through the **Arkwright Engineering Trust Scholarships** which they were awarded in London at the beginning of the year. We have another student, James Cant who has just been awarded a scholarship for the coming year.

- Gordano students have been successful in regional and National **STEM based competitions** this year; Yr8 students took part in a regional competition to design and build a prototype glider, Yr9 students designed and built a working paint mixer and dispenser for Art teachers and Yr7-9 students won the regional heat and went through to the National Final of the 1st Lego League robotics competition. We also had success in regional Masterchef competitions and our 6th robotics students came 2nd in a National Robotics challenge organised by the Universities of Southampton and Bristol.

- Students in Science have enjoyed a number of activities both within and outside of lessons during National Biology and Chemistry weeks when extra curricular activities were organised.

- We have had a number of outside speakers come in to talk to students across a wide range of subjects this year. Students have enjoyed talks on the digital gaming industry, the wing design of aircraft, the interior design of aircraft, how to prepare and present food in a commercial kitchen and how to build earthquake resistant buildings though a presentation conducted entirely in Spanish.

- In Music and PE students are benefitting from our commitment to STEM work through the use of foot keyboards, heart monitors and pedometers all of which are bringing technology into the classroom.

- Many of our Maths students have been involved in a range of STEM related extra curricular activities attending workshops in Chippenham, working with local engineering companies and being mentored through a 4 week engineering challenge. Plans are already in place for similar activities next year.

- The annual Design and Technology celebration evening took place in July and was once again a huge success with a display of 3D products and a stunning fashion show displaying a wider range of Textiles garments.

This year the faculty STEM Reps have also been working on the theme for a common, cross curricular STEM project next year. The theme of Glastonbury has been chosen which will give us scope for some new exciting projects in all subjects.





## Geography V1 Lunch

To celebrate World Food Day in September 2013, we asked students studying Geography and Languages to pick some food from another part of the world and create a dish. Some brought food in that was prepackaged, whilst others decided to make and create a dish that looks brilliant from scratch. We then narrowed up the food's location to the country of its origin on the world map and then shared in lunch.

Staff and V1 formers from Geography and Languages came along and the atmosphere was electric.

## Field trips in Geography 2013-14

The Geography department has broadened their horizons this year to run field trips for each year group providing content specific knowledge and skills, as well as enrichment to the whole person. The overall aim is to enable each student to go into the field and see exactly what it is they are learning about. This has included:

- Enhanced geography knowledge
- Developing awareness of physical and human characteristics around us
- Improving geographical understanding
- Increased confidence and independence



## Trips that have taken place in 2013 – 2014

We have run trips to Hinckley point for year 13; The South Hams and Exeter as a year 12 residential; Cardiff and the Brecon Beacons for year 11; Bristol Harbourside for year 10; Portishead for year 9; the Eden Project for year 8 and Tyntesfield National Trust for year 7.

Through these trips, we have enabled students to have enrichment opportunities to enhance their Geography lessons and allowed them to learn many subject specific and transferable skills outside of the classroom that they are able to put into practice.

Examples include: decision making, team work, justifying, evaluating, time management to complete work in the field, as well as allowing time to learn through discovery and having fun in the rain with the Geography teachers!

## Paired Reading in the Library

Since November 2013 we have had paired reading in the library twice a week, between our Learning Support Assistants and some of our Year 7s. We have noticed a definite improvement in the students' reading ages as a result of our 6-week reading intervention programme, and the students and staff really enjoy reading and sharing books together.

The books are chosen from a selection of Quick Reads and also from books purchased through pupil premium funds.



## Politics Opportunities

Providing students with the opportunities to see the subjects they're learning in a real life context is essential in bringing their learning alive, and there have been numerous opportunities for Politics students this year. As well as a Politics Society and Film Club, there have been lunch time talks about various topics such as Harold Wilson and the Liam Fox North Somerset Debating Competition, won by Gordano's very own Emily Wall and Freya Park.

There were so many students eager to be involved in the Debating Competition that Ted Powell has been working with Year 10s to host a separate competition that will be held in early September. Other developments for next academic year include talks from Richard Young, Professor of Criminology and Deputy Head of the Law School at Bristol University on criminal justice and careers within law and, hopefully, a talk by Zac Barker from the pressure group Republic.





## Health and Social Care

The BTEC Diploma in Health and Social Care started in Year 12 this year as a replacement for the A-level in Health and Social Care. It is a vocational course that carries exactly the same UCAS points as the traditional A-levels but is taught and delivered very differently.

As part of the course the students have to complete 100 hours work experience which prepares them for careers in the health or social care sectors, and helps to develop skills and qualities sought after by employers and higher education providers in a variety of fields. This year they have completed placements in primary schools, child minders and in a dementia care day centre as well as visited Charlton Farm Children's Hospice and further placements are planned next year at Clevedon Cottage Hospital, a local physiotherapy clinic and a baby unit in a nursery. Combining vocational practice with academic work gives the students an ideal base from which to pursue employment or a university education.

These placements not only give the students an inside view into what different careers in this field entail but help to develop skills and qualities that are invaluable in the current employment market. They learn how to communicate with different age groups, they learn punctuality and timekeeping and the general responsibility of working in a people-centred setting. They experience professionalism, the need for confidentiality and how to treat all clients with respect. They have planned and carried out activities from reading to children and creating Christmas decorations to planting and gardening with elderly clients, as well as helping with the general running and day to day routine of working in different types of settings.

It has also been invaluable to be able to build links with the community. By the students going into the locality and representing the school we are able to build up the school's profile among local businesses and provisions, which has been important to the settings, the school and to the pupils themselves. The students' Health and Social Care teacher, Kate Faulkner, visits the students in their placements to build further bridges with the settings as they have a reference point to contact at school. The settings have all been keen to forge links with Gordano and the pupils have enjoyed being able to go into the community where they live to help out and learn outside the classroom.

The BTEC Diploma has been an excellent addition to the school's vocational provision and we have had excellent responses and feedback from the students and their parents as well as from the settings. As one of the girls commented after their activity – "I never knew I could do that!"





## Challenge for the More Able

As a SSAT Lead School for More Able Provision, we're proud of the opportunities provided by our Challenge and Potential Programmes. The Challenge Programme involves a timetabled series of Masterclasses that are open to all as well as Subject Challenge Projects that support our Subject Challenge Guide that is issued to all students nominated for the Able Student Register.

**Masterclasses** that ran in 2013-14 include:

- Rat Dissection
- Science Cafés considering: infectious diseases, 'cycling the Coral Triangle'
- Doing Voluntary Service Overseas
- Rights of Women
- Animal Rights
- Fractals
- Creative Writing – Meet a Self-Published Author
- Psychology and Me
- Ballet
- Trestle Masks
- Did People Really go to the Moon?
- Cooking for Life
- Robotics

**Subject Challenge Projects** provide opportunities for students to extend their learning from that of the classroom and the list below gives a flavour of the sort of things that ran in 2013-14:

- **Robotics** Competition, run by Richard Moore, where 7 Gordano students came an excellent 2nd position after competing against 50 other 6th form teams from the UK and Germany.
- **Spelling Bee** for Year 7 and 8 students
- **BBC School Report** for Year 7 students interested in writing, filming and editing news reports
- **Carnegie Reading Group**, shadowing the Carnegie Young Adult Fiction Award and ending with a morning writing reviews of the short listed books
- **Maths Challenge** Competition
- **Year 9 Skirting Science** – 15 girls attended the annual Skirting Science event, where they worked with employers from across the area in workshops linked to a variety of STEM subjects

- **Cambridge University Chemistry Challenge** (Year 12). It was an amazing achievement for 2 of our students to achieve Gold and 4 to achieve Bronze. Students' resilience was praised by the university - well done!

- **Classics For All:** For the third year, we've been delighted that the University of Bristol's Classics Department have been able to provide a ten week taster session to Year 8 students, giving a basic introduction to the culture and history of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds and taught by a trained graduate. The sessions have given almost 25 students the educational enrichment and excitement that comes from learning about the cultures of the ancient world and culminated in a visit to the university to attend a lecture by Professor Robert Fowler on Herculaneum, a Roman town which, like Pompeii, was buried in the AD 79 eruption of Mt Vesuvius

- **Learning Visits Programme:** This programme for aspiring vets, medics, architects and lawyers is now in its fifth year and provides these Year 11 students with sessions looking at the courses open to them and provides them with opportunities to visit places of work in the summer to gain working knowledge of their chosen careers. It was a real success of Rebecca Grist and David Hunt who run the programme that we were able to get 20 students on Learning Visits, with many of them visiting three different places of work.

## Year 11 Aspire

After the success of our more able students at GCSE and A Level last year, we continued to run the Year 11 Aspire programme this year for students aiming for A and A\* in their GCSEs. Students attended two assemblies considering Mindset and the barriers preventing them achieving the best possible grades before attending a personalised timetable of subject specific A\* revision sessions.

## Breakfast Revision Sessions

Open to all GCSE students were exam breakfasts, where students were able to have a free breakfast and hear last minute tips and advice from their subject teachers. This was a great way for students to start their day on a positive and have any last minute questions answered.



### Go4Set Challenge 2014

Earlier this year, 4 boys from year 9 were lucky enough to be selected to take part in this year's Go4Set challenge and tasked with investigation the application of electronics in the environment. As part of this challenge they were allocated 3 mentors from a local company called Semtec, who design and manufacture integrated circuits for the communications industry and were supported in school by Nigel Johnson from Design Technology.

The group, including the mentors, then met and discussed the application of electronics in school and how they can be used to make our lives easier. Having short listed a number a project to investigate they finally decided they would design and build a paint dispenser to be used in the art department to reduce the amount of paint wasted and allow consistent mixing.

Throughout the investigating and designing process the group met their mentors on a weekly basis, even communicating with one of their mentors whilst he was on a business trip to Canada via Skype.

Finally the group developed a design which would deliver a fixed dose of five different colours of paint and despite slight logistical problems of getting the pumps sent by 24 hour delivery from China, were able to manufacture an infra red remote controlled fully functional machine.

In addition to this they also produced a very professional technical report detailing their roles in

the team, the theoretical calculations and research needed design the system and a plan for the production and testing of the final product.

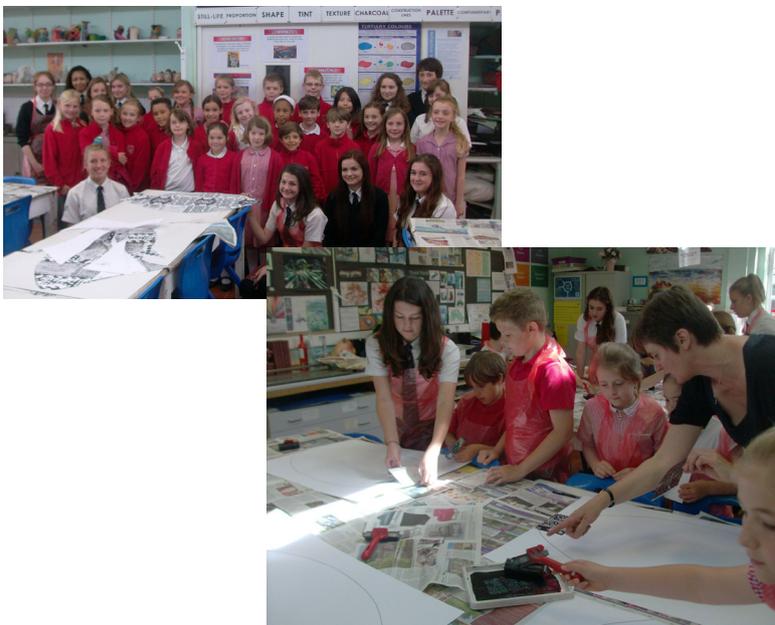
The team then took their product to the University of Bristol for a celebration day where they gave a presentation to 3 judges and demonstrated the paint mixing abilities of their machine. Our team were the only ones to produce a fully working machine and received fantastic feedback from everybody who saw it working.

At the end of the day the team narrowly missed out and a prize for the best overall project, but it was clear to all that attended that their paint mixing machine was the best working product in the competition.

The boys involved in the project were: Bradley Chapman, team leader, Toby Hall, Nathaniel May and Varun Jugoo.

### KS2 Challenge Workshops

We're really pleased that in 2013-14 we were able to run even more workshops for more able students from our local primary schools. These workshops not only provide stretch and challenge for Year 4-6 students and ease transition to Gordano when they reach Year 7, but also provide opportunities for our more able students to mentor and support during the workshops. This year, we ran sessions in PE, Art, Maths, English, Music and Science





### Potential Programme

The Potential Programme is now in its 5th year and we were delighted that this year's Year 13s who were the first Year 9 group to be involved in the programme were also our record year for getting into Oxbridge, with 7 students being given places, including both our Head Boy and Head Girl!

The Programme is designed to provide opportunities for students who should be aiming for the most competitive courses and destinations and involves a wide range of opportunities for students to extend their learning, such as national competitions, trips and off timetable sessions to develop Personal Learning and Thinking Skills and to improve students' confidence and motivation to succeed. The programme makes use of an innovative online tool where students are able to see upcoming opportunities as well as reflect on the opportunities they have completed, in preparation for future application and CV writing.

This year's key developments include:

- **Effort:** For the second year running, students with the highest effort scores were invited to apply for the programme as well as students with high academic abilities and achievements
- **Application:** Year 9 students interested in becoming part of the programme were asked to write an application for the first time this year, in an attempt to get them thinking about their commitment to the programme as well as to prepare them for later applications they will need to write. It was an excellent endorsement of the programme that we now have 60 Year 9 students, almost double that of the previous year!
- **Graduation:** Students who did not engage fully with the programme were asked to reapply in line with our renewed focus on effort

**Oxbridge visits:** We were pleased to be able to run two trips this year, one to Oxford for students from both Gordano and Castle School in Thornbury and a residential to Cambridge for students from across North Somerset Schools. It was a great opportunity for students to get a taste of university life, engage with the application process and meet like minded students from other schools.

**Challenge Day:** The Challenge Day in February was one of the most successful yet, with students working in cross year group teams on a subject of their choice. Students had the morning to work on a series of challenges considering how to best market and sell an idea or product, before being set the challenge of selling their subject. The teams presented to parents and a panel of judges and prizes were awarded at the end of the day.

**Leadership Presentation:** It was a delight to welcome William Montgomery from AskTen Leadership Consultancy to speak to Potential students in June, who came to us through the Speakers for Schools Programme. As the former navigating officer of HMS Ark Royal and Head of Strategic Change at Lloyds TSB, William was the perfect voice to end our Potential year with, giving the students lots to think about and real life examples of leadership in action and over 85% of students gave extremely positive feedback about the session, with one Year 9 student reflecting that it 'made me think about how I view life'.





## Gordano goes 360

In the last few weeks of term the work of the past few years developing Gordano's E-Safety provision was recognised in our being awarded the 360 Award for ESafety. Graham Manson and his ESafety team have worked with staff, students, governors and our PCSO Dawn Tremlett to ensure that the review was a success and the glowing praise of the accreditor who visited Gordano was a wonderful way to end the year.

## IPads

After the purchase of a set of IPads last year to support the Dartfish software in PE, a set has now been in trial in both Humanities and Science to support learning in the classroom.

## Twitter

Twitter continues to be used by a large number of faculties in Gordano to support students' reading around the subject and to advertise and update students on key events and developments. The school's Twitter account for trips was widely used by parents, staff and students during our Activities Week this year and it'

## Online Learning and Software Investments

There are a wide variety of educational subscription based websites available and in 2013-14, Leading Edge has helped to fund a number of sites providing invaluable resources for students. Examples include:

- GCSEPod, an online service providing audio visual podcasts for students to download or watch online. There are over 3500 podcasts covering 18 different subjects and the service is available for all of Gordano's GCSE students, with over 1600 podcasts having been streamed or downloaded.
- The Maths department's subscription to Twig, a set of film based products to support learning.
- NESSY software to support literacy in Gordano's Boost class and students working in Learning Support and 'The Centre'. Nesy aims to provide fun, educational software and uses assessment to identify need and then direct students to the relevant game or activity to support their literacy or numeracy.
- BestChoice website for A Level Chemistry students – an online resource to both consolidate and extend students's learning – overseen by Deri Phillips, who is extremely proud that Rob March achieved the Number 1 world ranking with over 200 marks.

## Padlet in Geography

Chloe Gibson has been developing the use of Padlet with her A Level Geography students, using the online 'wall' to provide ease of access to all students' lessons, homework, additional links and reading as well as exam and revision resources all in one place.





### Employability

Part of Gordano's provision for Employability Skills includes a day of mock interviews for Year 10 students in the run up to their week of Work Experience in July. The following was a delight to read from one of the many businesses who were kind enough to give up their time to support our students in this way:

*Following up on a volunteering opportunity highlighted by CSSW I was delighted to attend a day of mock job interviews at Gordano School in Portishead on Monday 17th June.*

*Having contacted the school I was asked if I could interview some of the school's year 10 students in relation to an application for a legal apprenticeship that was part of their Employability programme. With my background in employment relations I felt that I would be able to bring some relevant experience to this scenario and started to prepare for the interviews.*

*On the day I joined many other volunteers in interviewing the students, some from local businesses and others from the public sector. We each had been given a job description of the position that we were interviewing for and a list of possible questions to put to the students. Each interview was to last around 10 minutes and we were expected to supply written feedback for each student to be used in assessing their performance with the teachers following the event.*

*I interviewed seven students and can genuinely say that I was very impressed by all of them. They all demonstrated a mature and thoughtful approach to the interview questions and most had clearly put in a fair amount of research into the role they were applying for. As most of us will recognise being interviewed for a job is one of the most demanding experiences in the workplace and the young people I interviewed, whilst being nervous, managed to give clear, coherent and relevant answers.*

*For me one of the most revealing aspects of the day was seeing how responsible and diligent the students were in relation to both their studies and their extra curricular activities. The stereotype of a teenager glued to a computer screen was one that didn't appear to have any substance to it as far as the pupils at Gordano are concerned.*

*Did one of the students get the job? Yes they did, but as I told one of their teacher's on the day, I would have had no hesitation in offering a job to six of the seven students I interviewed. They were a credit to themselves and their school and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this volunteering opportunity to anyone who would like to see a more positive picture of young people than the one we are so often given by the media.*

Mike Fenn, Trainer/Adviser for Acas South West





## Relaxation Sessions

Tamzin Brain ran the second year of Relaxation Sessions for students at Gordano in 2014, covering issues such as: Relaxation Techniques; Breathing Exercises; Visualisation – to improve study habits and promote exam success; Coping strategies; Study skills and Exam Tips.

Students who've attended the sessions were positive about the opportunity to learn how to 'stay calm', with one student reflecting that they 'can now handle myself better in stressful situations'.

## Project Gordano

Project Gordano (once the Student Leadership Team) originated as a Leading Edge project to develop leadership and team work skills in our students and to give students the platform to influence school development.

One of our more recent teams is the Community Links team who recently took part in the Festival of Ages at Weston Super Mare Playhouse. It was a lovely event where various groups of young and old people from across North Somerset had a chance to present the work they had been working on together over the past year.

The Community Links team devised the Talking Time Capsule, which saw ten of our students writing letters back and forth with ten elderly residents of Alliance Homes properties in Portishead. The aim was to create positive links between the two generations and work towards improving negative opinions local older residents may have of our pupils. Yesterday, our students presented a 'This is your life' style piece and read the life story of their partner, which they had written from information gathered from the letters. They were then introduced to their penfriends on stage for the very first time. The stories they wrote were really moving and the information fascinating! Everyone especially enjoyed hearing Vera's tales (95, in the red jacket!) from her global travels during WW2.



## The Talking Time Capsule Project





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

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