



ONCE A DRAYTONIAN, ALWAYS A DRAYTONIAN



On 23 of May, Drayton Manor High School came together to celebrate and say goodbye to our incredible Year 11 and Year 13 students. The day was a heartfelt mix of celebration and reflection, marking the end of a significant chapter in their school lives.



The festivities began with a warm gathering in the dining hall, where students enjoyed a celebratory spread and shared laughter,

memories, and well-wishes. One of the most touching traditions, signing each other's shirts, turned school uniforms into treasured keepsakes filled with personal messages and moments to remember.



As they now look ahead to exciting new paths, we send the Class of 2026 off with pride, gratitude, and our very best wishes for the future.



BATTLE OF THE BANDS

On Wednesday 22 April, the school hall was alive with energy, talent, and unforgettable performances as we hosted our 3rd Annual Battle of the Bands—a highlight of the school calendar that continues to grow bigger and better each year.

This year's event showcased our incredible 11 finalists, featuring talented students from Year 7 right through to Sixth Form. The diversity of performers ensured a rich mix of

musical styles, from classic rock and indie to modern pop and original compositions. In fact, the audience was treated to two fantastic original songs, demonstrating not only performance skills but also the creativity and songwriting talent within our school community.



Adding to the excitement were our brilliant student comperes, who kept the evening flowing with enthusiasm and humour, while our team of student bouncers and cheerleaders helped create a lively and supportive atmosphere throughout the event. The sense of community and encouragement was truly inspiring, with every band cheered on by a packed and appreciative audience. We were also delighted to welcome a panel of special guest judges, bringing both experience and connection to the school. Returning after her involvement last year was West End performer Laura Darton, alongside two of our talented alumni, DJs Jordzz and Ismael, whose presence added a special sense of continuity and inspiration for current students.



After much deliberation, the judges crowned this year's winners: Eddie's Children, made up of Ornella, Selma, David, and Maria. Their performance of Iron Maiden's Children of the Damned stood out for its musicality, stage presence, and cohesion as a band, earning them a well-deserved victory and rapturous applause from the audience.



A huge congratulations goes out to all the performers who took to the stage—it takes courage, dedication, and passion to perform live, and every band contributed to making the evening a resounding success. We would also like to thank everyone involved behind the scenes, from organisers and technicians to staff and students, whose hard work made the event possible.



We're already looking forward to next year's competition - if this year is anything to go by, the future of music at our school is incredibly bright!



HANWELL HOOTIE



We are thrilled to celebrate the success of our student band Hot Embers—Mia, Yui, David, and Eloise - who had the incredible honour of opening the Hanwell Hootie, London's largest free music festival. Taking to the main stage in Viaduct Meadow, the band delivered a confident and exciting set, earning rapturous applause from the crowd. Their performance included two original songs, showcasing both their musical talent and creativity. This was a fantastic first taste of professional

musicianship for the group, and they rose to the occasion brilliantly. Congratulations to Hot Embers on such a memorable achievement—we can't wait to see what they do next!



ALICE GROSS MEMORIAL SONG WRITING AWARD



A talented student, Millie, has been named the winner of the 2026 Alice Gross Memorial Songwriting Award, following a highly competitive field of entries judged by leading music industry professionals. Millie's winning song, "Forget Me Not," stood out to the judging panel for its originality, lyrical depth, and strong musical composition. Judges independently reviewed submissions before unanimously recognising her track as this year's standout entry. The award celebrates creativity and emerging talent in songwriting, and Millie's success highlights both her artistic skill and dedication to her craft. Richard Harris commended the song for its inventive storytelling and poetic language: "This is a great example of a song written about a true human experience and then wrapped up into a cool metaphor... there's a poetry to the writing that feels well thought through and paints excellent imagery throughout the song." Cliff Bradley, composer and producer, praised the technical strengths of the piece: "A well thought out song, both lyrically and musically. A lot of effort has obviously gone into structuring the arrangement and form of the song. The change to 6/8 at the end is an

unexpected but welcome twist." Meanwhile, Rebecca Richardson, Head of Slough Music Service and gospel singing specialist, was particularly impressed by the performance quality: "Sounded like a professionally mixed track. It had a very familiar sound which engaged me with the song. Her voice is unique and there was some great overlaying of vocals." All entries from the competition are available to listen to online, showcasing a diverse range of talent and musical styles: <https://on.soundcloud.com/VokLyDrfd7atXt9SZK>

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS - YOUNG ARTISTS' SUMMER SHOW



Congratulations to Aoi (7G), Saarah (7E) and Pola (7L), whose collaborative acrylic painting created during Art Club has been selected for both the online exhibition and the on-site display at the Royal Academy of Arts as part of the Young Artists' Summer Show. The Young Artists' Summer Show is a free national exhibition for students aged 4–18 studying in the UK, with artworks judged by a panel of artists and arts professionals. Selected pieces are exhibited online and at the Royal Academy of Arts from 14 July to 30 August. This is a fantastic achievement, and we are incredibly proud of their creativity and teamwork. More information can be found [here](#):





ALUMNI VISIT- MAKSYM BELKO



Alumnus Maksym Belko returned to run a workshop to support our students, delivering an informal and supportive session focused on wellbeing, progress and future aspirations. Students had the opportunity to discuss their studies and ask questions about progression routes, including sixth form and university. The session provided a reassuring and relatable perspective from someone who has shared similar experiences, helping to strengthen a sense of belonging while offering encouragement during a key stage in their education.

ALUMNI VISIT – DR JANET BOLAGI AND GRACE BOLAGI



We were delighted to welcome back alumni Dr Janet Bolagi and Grace Bolagi, who delivered an inspiring assembly sharing their journeys into careers in medicine and law. They spoke about their experiences from school through to higher education and beyond, providing valuable insight into entering competitive professional fields. Students were encouraged to reflect on their own motivations and to seek out opportunities and role models. A follow-up workshop allowed interested students to ask further questions and explore career pathways in more detail, making this a highly impactful and engaging visit.

ALUMNI VISIT – LEON CHECKLAND

Year 12 Government and Politics students welcomed alumnus Leon Checkland, who shared his journey from Drayton Manor to the University of Cambridge and into his

current role on the Civil Service Fast Stream. Leon spoke about his experience studying humanities subjects at A Level and beyond, highlighting the key skills these develop, including critical thinking, analysis, and effective communication.

He also provided valuable insight into careers within local government and the wider civil service, explaining the range of roles available and the routes into these careers. Leon shared his own experiences of working in local government through a graduate scheme, as well as offering practical advice on applications, skills development and making informed choices about future pathways. The session was highly beneficial, giving students a clearer and more realistic understanding of careers in politics and public service, while helping to raise aspirations and confidence in pursuing these fields.



OXBRIDGE SOIRÉE – YEARS 10 AND 12



We were pleased to host an Oxbridge Soirée for students in Years 10 and 12, designed to inspire and inform those considering competitive university pathways. The event focused on raising awareness of opportunities at Oxford, Cambridge and other leading universities, as well as building students' confidence in aiming high with their future aspirations.

Year 13 students shared their personal journeys, offering insight into A Level choices, the university application process and how to prepare for competitive courses, including developing strong study habits and wider reading. The event provided a supportive and engaging environment for younger students

to ask questions, helping them to better understand their options, feel more confident about their future pathways, and begin thinking more proactively about the steps needed to achieve their goals.

YEAR 13 UNICOMPARE CLEARING ASSEMBLY

Year 13 students attended a UniCompare session focused on Navigating UCAS Clearing with Confidence. The assembly explained the Clearing process in a clear and practical way, addressing common misconceptions and highlighting it as a potential opportunity rather than just a backup option. Students were guided through how to prepare for results day, including what questions to ask universities and how to make informed decisions under pressure. The session helped students feel more confident and prepared as they approach their next steps.

YEAR 12 UNIVERSITY OF EXETER – DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Year 12 students attended an informative assembly led by the University of Exeter, focusing on degree apprenticeships as an alternative post-18 pathway. The session explored what apprenticeships involve, the wide range of sectors available across the UK, and how the application process works, including key timelines and expectations for applicants.

Students gained valuable insight into the benefits of this route, including the opportunity to earn while learning, gain hands-on experience with leading employers, and graduate with both a degree and industry experience. The session also helped to dispel common misconceptions about apprenticeships, broadening students' understanding of the range and quality of opportunities available. Overall, it supported students in making more informed and confident decisions about their future pathways.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON – MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE CAREERS

Students in Years 10 and 12 attended an engaging medicine and healthcare careers talk delivered in partnership with Imperial College London. A practising doctor and a current medical student shared insights into studying medicine, including subject choices, application requirements and the skills needed for success.



The session also provided an overview of the wide range of careers within healthcare and offered honest reflections on life at medical school and beyond. Students had the opportunity to ask questions, helping them to develop a clearer and more realistic understanding of medical pathways. Overall, the session was both informative and inspiring, particularly for those considering future careers in healthcare.



YEAR 10 UNIVERSITY OF EXETER – INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION



Some Year 10 students took part in an engaging introductory session on higher education, delivered by the University of Exeter. The session provided a clear overview of post-18 pathways, with a focus on what university study involves, including course structures, campus life, and the benefits of higher education.

Students were encouraged to reflect on their own strengths, interests and future aspirations, helping them to see university as an achievable and realistic option. The session also introduced key concepts such as choosing the right course and understanding progression routes. Overall, it was an inspiring experience that helped to raise aspirations, build early awareness, and encourage students to begin thinking proactively about their long-term goals.

YEAR 9 RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE VISIT

Some Year 9 students attended a session at Richmond upon Thames College focused on

post-16 pathways and progression beyond Year 11. During the visit, students were introduced to the wide range of courses available, entry requirements, and the different pathways they can pursue after completing their GCSEs.

The session gave students a valuable insight into college life, particularly the differences between school and college study, including greater independence, responsibility and flexibility in learning. Students were also encouraged to reflect on their own learning styles and how these may influence their future choices. Overall, the visit was a highly beneficial experience, helping students to build confidence in their decision-making and develop a clearer understanding of the opportunities available to them in the future.



BRILLIANT CLUB GRADUATION – KING’S COLLEGE LONDON



Year 10 students attended a graduation event at King’s College London as part of the Brilliant Club Scholars Programme, celebrating the successful completion of their academic work. The day included a campus tour of Guy’s Campus, introducing students to a real university environment, alongside a Q&A session with student ambassadors, which provided valuable first-hand insight

into university life, study expectations and opportunities.



Students also took part in an information, advice and guidance session on higher education, helping them to better understand future pathways and what to expect from university study. The visit concluded with a formal graduation ceremony, where students collected certificates in recognition of their achievements throughout the programme. For many, this was their first university experience, making it a particularly impactful day that helped to build confidence, raise aspirations and encourage greater consideration of higher education as a future pathway.



WOMAN AND GIRLS NETWORK – GROUP PROJECT





This term, we successfully completed a six-week programme in partnership with the Women and Girls Network.

We were proud to run four groups, including a specialist group focused on exam skills for Year 11.

Students engaged positively throughout, demonstrating growth in confidence and self-awareness. We are currently planning a graduation event to celebrate their participation and achievements.

MOZARTISTS



We were delighted to welcome Mozartists into school for an unforgettable musical experience with our Year 7 students. The visit featured an exceptional team of professional musicians, including internationally renowned conductor Ian Page, a professional soprano, and an expert pianist.

Across a series of lively two-hour workshops with 120 students at a time, Year 7 explored a Mozart canon, singing in six different languages, including Latin. The sessions culminated in a stunning performance of Laudate Dominum, featuring the soprano soloist.

A huge thank you goes to our older students who supported the sessions and to the staff who helped make the event such a success. The experience concluded with a truly inspirational assembly performance the following morning, where all of Year 7 came together to sing the Mozart canon—an uplifting moment for everyone involved.

MERITS EVENT



The recent Merits Event was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the hard work,

dedication and positive achievements of our students across the school. It was incredibly encouraging to see so many students recognised for their consistent effort, positive behaviour, excellent attendance, and contribution to the wider school community. The atmosphere throughout the event was extremely positive, with students genuinely proud to be acknowledged for their achievements in front of staff and peers. Events like this play an important role in reinforcing our school values and recognising the many students who continue to make positive choices every day.

YEAR 10 BRILLIANT CLUB SCHOLARS PROGRAMME



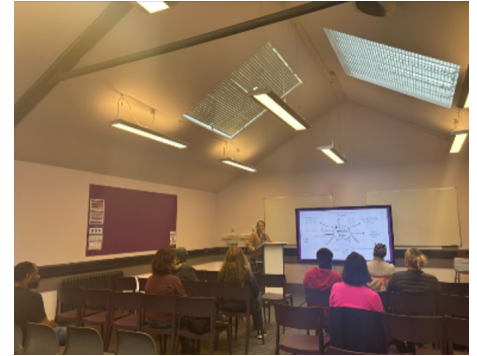
This term, Year 10 students successfully completed the Brilliant Club Scholars Programme, working with a PhD tutor from the University of Sussex on the topic 'Gender, Race and Performativity in UK Rap Music.' Students engaged thoughtfully with challenging academic material and showed excellent commitment, maturity and resilience in completing their final assignments. The programme provided a valuable introduction to university-style learning, encouraging independent thinking and academic discussion. To celebrate their achievements, students attended a graduation event at King's College London. This marked a significant milestone, recognising their hard work while also giving many students their first experience of a university environment, further raising aspirations for higher education.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH EXAM STRESS (YEARS 11-13)

We recently delivered a parent information session for families of students in Years 11–13, focusing on how to support young people during the exam period.

The session explored the impact of exam stress and offered practical advice on how

parents can support wellbeing, motivation, and effective routines at home. We were pleased to see strong attendance and engagement, reflecting the importance of working together to support students at this crucial time.



PE

This PE and Sport newsletter report brings you a full recap of our football and basketball seasons, highlighting some of the standout performances and results from across the school. We also shine a spotlight on the summer term's extracurricular clubs: athletics, girls' rounders and cricket. These clubs are up and running and open to all. Read on to find out more about what's been happening in Drayton Manor sport this half term.

BASKETBALL

In Girls Basketball, the determination of the team has shone brightly this season, with players training tirelessly each week. That hard work paid off in spectacular fashion as the team powered their way to 1st place in the KS3 Girls Basketball Ealing Borough Tournament! Congratulations to the girls Team who show incredible potential. It will be exciting to see them continue to grow and develop.

The Senior Boys completed their league season unbeaten, demonstrating excellent discipline, confidence and team spirit. Both Junior and Senior finals took place against Ada Lovelace in the last week of the Spring Term with the Seniors winning their game in dominant fashion.

A special mention to Lincoln Cheung and Daniel Rybalka who have been integral members of the team throughout their years at Drayton, both outstanding role models and high-level performers across their school journeys.

The Junior Boys went into the Ealing League final as underdogs as they had lost to Ada Lovelace earlier in the season. The team began the game with renewed confidence and



determination and pulled off the performance of the season - winning the match and reclaiming the U14 Ealing basketball league title!

A huge congratulations to all the players for their commitment, teamwork, and ambition. And a special thank you to Coach Dawkins and Coach Concielle, whose energy, expertise, and weekly training sessions have been instrumental in driving the team's success. What a phenomenal achievement!

WILKINSON SWORD ATHLETICS



On 1st May our Junior (Years 8 and 9) and Intermediate (Years 10 and 11) athletes competed in the Wilkinson Sword competition, which is the Ealing Borough Trophy for the best overall school in Athletics. A team of 46 students, accompanied by Mr Bowman, Mrs Williams and Coach Sarim, travelled to Perivale Park Athletics Track to compete against the 16 other schools in the Borough.

Congratulations to the Intermediate Girls and Intermediate Boys for taking 1st place in their competitions. The Junior Boys and Junior Girls placed in 2nd and 4th respectively. Our athletes claimed an impressive 7 gold, 9 silver, and 8 bronze out of 46 events. A special mention to two of our athletes who won 1st place in both of their individual events: Sofia (10G) and Owen (9I).



We would like to give our thanks to the Sixth Form Sports Leaders for their help on the day: Elizabeth 12.5, Soraya 12.6, Evie 12.4, Naimah 12.2, Felix 12.2, and Noah 12.5. Our Year 7 athletes will have the opportunity to compete for the Wilkinson Sword on Friday 12th June.

FOOTBALL



After an undefeated season, we are delighted to announce that the Under 14 Girls football team were crowned champions of the Ealing League. Congratulations to the players, Coach Hoda and Mrs Williams for an incredible performance! The girls worked incredibly hard this season and have shown great grit and determination. The players have all the ingredients for further success as they have already shown the characteristics of a great team. We are excited to celebrate their achievements next half-term.



Mr Bowman and the Year 8 Boys team have had an incredible season. In the Ealing League Second Division, they secured 2nd place overall in the Borough. After a nail-biting win by penalty shootout against Cardinal Wiseman in the Cup semifinal, the stage was set for an exciting Final. Our Year 8 boys rose to the occasion in the Cup final, producing a composed and commanding performance to win 4-1. Alex was outstanding throughout, scoring a hat-trick, with Noel adding a fourth to complete the victory. As a fitting celebration of another great Under 18 football season, students took part in a House 5-a-side tournament. It was a chance to enjoy some friendly competition before the exam period got underway. The tournament was supported by Mr Black, Mr Bowman, Mr Grudgings, Mr Obi and Coach Sarim. Phoenix topped the competition to be crowned winners.



CRICKET

Club training for our cricketers has started this term at the school playing fields every Wednesday.

The Under 15 team will have their league first match of the season against William Perkin on 20 May. We wish them good luck!

GIRLS ROUNDERS

Students from Years 7-10 are set to compete in the Borough Rounders Tournaments this term. Rounders Club is well attended each Wednesday, with all teams looking to be successful this season.

Upcoming tournaments will be for the Year 10 and Year 9 teams on 14 May and 19 May respectively, hosted by the Ellen Wilkinson School.

TCS MINI LONDON MARATHON 2026

Three students from Drayton Manor High School were selected by Ealing Borough to compete in the TCS Mini London Marathon Borough Challenge on Saturday 25th April. The event is a 2.6km race which gives the UK's most promising young athletes the chance to compete against the best new talent in British road running. It is a unique opportunity for children and young people to cross the iconic TCS London Marathon Finish Line and receive the coveted Mini Marathon medal. Congratulations to the following students on their race results:

- Naimah (12.2) - Under 18 Girls - 15th place out of 118 athletes
- Owen (9I) - Under 16 Boys - 38th place out of 153 athletes
- Dante (12.3) - Under 18 Boys - 78th place out of 142 athletes



YEAR 12 SPORTS LEADERS



Our Year 12 Sports Leaders have been doing fantastic work this year under the guidance of Mr Grudgings, developing their skills in leading sport sessions and coaching techniques. Already putting theory into practice, they have run a number of sport sessions for Year 7 students, with the aim of empowering them to deliver even more recreational sessions for the lower school and within their local community. In March, they had an exciting opportunity to take part in the FA Club Maker Workshop - a new initiative designed to support young people in taking their first steps into football volunteering. The workshop introduced our Sports Leaders to the wide range of roles available to them off the pitch, inspiring the next generation of community sport leaders.



WHAT HAVE THEY BEEN UP TO...

Our students are a talented and committed bunch! In this section we celebrate some highlights of their achievements outside of school.

BELLA, YEAR 9 JIU-JITSU COMPETITION



Congratulations to Bella in Year 9 for her achievements in Jiu-Jitsu. She recently competed in European Kids Jui-Jitsu IBJJF Championship and came close second in the final to a two time world champion. this was Bella's first major competition in the yellow belt division, so congratulations to Bella!

EUROPEAN ITF TAEKWON-DO CHAMPIONSHIPS



Lorenzo in Year 9 competed last week at the European ITF Taekwon-Do Championships, representing Italy. After a six-month national selection process, he was chosen as one of the top two athletes in the country to compete in 6 different disciplines (a record as most athletes only compete in 2 or 3).

We are pleased to report that Lorenzo performed very well, stepping onto the podium three times at this year's competition. He was awarded three bronze medals in three disciplines: traditional sparring, team patterns, and team special techniques. Congratulations to Lorenzo!

ENG NETBALL LEAGUE SOUTHERN FINALS

Congratulations to Charlotte in 7H, who has achieved fantastic success in netball with her club team, winning the ENG Netball League Southern Finals and progressing to the national championship finals. The team has also reached the Sisters in Sport national finals later this term. A superb achievement at such a high level—well done, Charlotte! If you know of a student in our community whose hard work should be acknowledged, please let us know by contacting

communications@draytonmanorhighschool.co.uk. This could be students involved in volunteering or helping in the community, musical or other activities.



KEY DATES FOR THE TERM AHEAD

EVENTS	DATE
School starts	1 June
Cambridge Chemistry Challenge Yr 12 Chemistry students	3 June
HPV Vaccine am	10 June
Battlefields Trip Years 9 departure	10 June
Battlefields Trip Years 9 return	11 June
Year 10 History Reward & Enrichment Trip to Windsor	18 June
Year 12 Work Experience	22 June
Year 10 Geography trip	24 June
Year 10 Geography trip	25 June
Visiting author for Year 7	25 June
UCAS Parent Event	1 July
Drayfest	6 July
Sports day	10 July
Scholars End of Year Celebration	14 July
Hanwell Roots and Routes Conference Led by The Proper Project	14 July
End of term	17 July – 1 September