



Teesdale School
& Sixth Form Centre

WINTER NEWSLETTER

December 2017

MERRY CHRISTMAS

It's been a wonderful term here at Teesdale School, with much to celebrate. From leading the Trust commemoration of Freedom City 2017, to the delightful letters Year 7 wrote to East Durham College thanking them for their great day out at Houghall, our students have continued to sparkle.

Year 7s impressed everyone at the new starters' concert and it was lovely to see our students coming together to sing. Mrs McGrath is also thrilled with the variety of musical events that have taken place during the festive season. We have been very busy singing and playing carols at St Mary's Church and the Bowes Museum, as well as at the Trust and school concerts - there's nothing quite like hearing children singing carols to bring the spirit of Christmas home.

The sixth form, together with our head boy, head girl and their deputies, have been busy ensuring that we think not only of ourselves at this time of year but also of those in need. Students selected charities they wanted to support themselves and enthusiastically organised collections for both the local food bank and for gifts to fill shoe boxes for those less fortunate, both at home and in Nepal.

Finally, all that remains is to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

Dr Janice Gorlach, Executive Headteacher
and Ms Clare Ellis, Headteacher

Ski school fun

Let's start the newsletter with a snowy story.

Did you know that Teesdale School has joined the English School Ski Association, which provides

opportunities across the north east for our students to become involved in ski racing? Through this, six of our students recently took part in some ski race training at Silksworth dry slope, with the bitterly cold weather doing nothing to freeze their enthusiasm! Under the watchful eye of top race coaches and members of the English School Ski Association, students did fitness work before hitting the slope for some slalom training. Student, Charlotte Single, said: "It was so different from normal skiing, but once I got the idea of how to race I really enjoyed the day."

As part of our membership of the association, students may get the opportunity to travel abroad to race if they are good enough! The next training event is in March and competent skiers wishing to be involved need to contact Mrs Brennan for further information.



Keep up with sporting successes and other stories on our Facebook and Twitter accounts. Links are on our school website.

Book review

THE SCREAMING STAIRCASE

by Jonathan Stroud

Reviewed by Stefani Jakonic-Bond

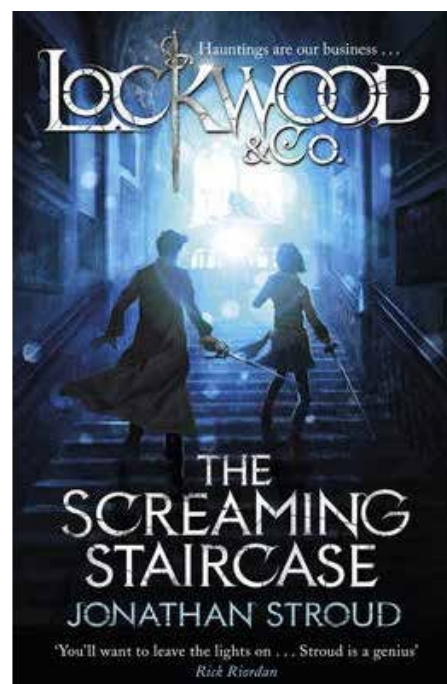
This book is the first in the young adult thriller series Lockwood and Co. by Jonathan Stroud with a 4.19 rating on Goodreads.

With the dead coming back to haunt the living for the last fifty years, somebody needs to save the day. This is where psychic investigation agencies like Lockwood and Co. come in, battling against the horrifying ghost epidemic one case at a time. However, these agencies aren't what you'd expect them to be, as only children and teenagers can see the deadly apparitions, only they can fight this ever worsening battle.

In most agencies the children are supervised by adults, but at Lockwood and Co., it's a little different. With no adult supervision, the agency is run by the charismatic daredevil, Anthony Lockwood, and the only remaining employee, the snarky secretary, George. Although, when Lucy Carlyle comes to London looking for a new job, she is soon dragged into working with the pair. At the beginning of the book Lockwood and Lucy are starting on a new investigation that ends horribly wrong. Having one last chance to redeem themselves, the gang must spend a night at Combe Carey Hall - one of the most haunted houses in England...

Stroud kicks off the first book in this series by weaving suspense and tension throughout. From the start you are thrown into the deep-end of this fantasy world terrorised by the supernatural and you will be left guessing until the last page.

The story is told in the first person narrative of Lucy Carlyle. Lucy brings an air of level-headedness to the gang that is needed, even though it is usually thrown to the wind, along with caution, by Lockwood. Yet without



that recklessness, the story would lose some of its appeal as the team risk their lives to fight with rapiers and bombs against ghastly threats. The book also has the right amount of humour as George's snarkiness, Lucy's sarcasm and Lockwood's wit act as the cherry on the cake to this already fantastic read.

A-level students shine

Our sixth formers were all smiles on A-level results day earlier this year, as their grades saw them off to study at their first-choice universities.

Overall, 100% of students who intended to go on to university achieved their grades and secured their places with 100% pass rates in all subjects.

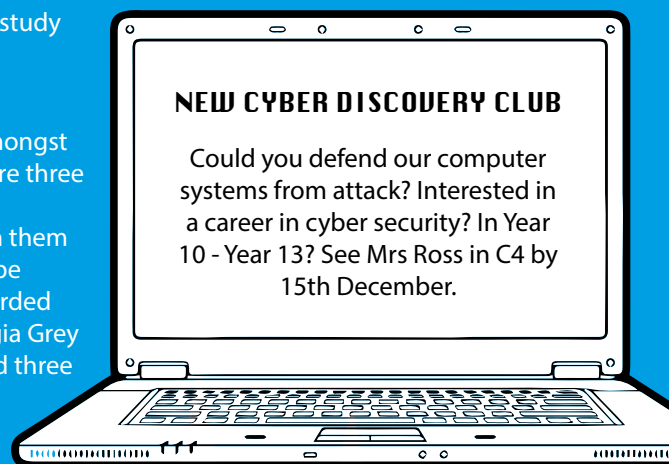
Ella Blackburn continues our tradition of sending students to Oxbridge, with A* grades

in history and English literature and an A in French. She is now studying history at St Catharine's College, Cambridge University.

Sam Holmes, also with straight A grades including an A* in mathematics, was delighted with his results and has moved on to York University to study natural sciences.

Students studying vocational qualifications also excelled. Amongst the many high grades there were three candidates who achieved ten distinction star grades between them - the highest possible that can be awarded. Declan Slack was awarded four distinction stars and Georgia Grey and Caitlin Owen each achieved three distinction stars.

Dr Janice Gorlach, our executive headteacher said: "The students' results are a testament to their ability combined with hard work, the support of their families and the dedication of our teaching staff."



Teesdale teachers' best ever Christmas memories!

It's almost Christmas, so we decided to ask our teachers what things they remember most fondly about this special time of year...

"My favourite Christmas memory was a recent weekend when we went to see Santa. My little boy's face was just amazing! He was star struck." - **Miss Bell**

"Because my birthday is on Boxing Day, one year the majority of my Christmas presents were wrapped in Happy Birthday paper instead of Christmas paper. My parents' budgeting at its finest!" - **Mr Charlton**

"When I was little, my Dad used to make us sit on the stairs while he checked if Santa had been; every year he said he hadn't!" - **Miss Donnelly**

"Nan's militancy in the annual game of Monopoly never fails to entertain us; a systematic approach in which she garners most of the board and bankrupts us all, one by one!" - **Miss Donahue**

"I got engaged on Christmas day last year! A week or so before the big day I cut open a bauble, put the engagement ring inside, glued it back up and hid it on the tree until Christmas morning. I then got down on one knee and the rest is history." - **Mr Alderson**

"My favourite Christmas memory was returning from Australia on Christmas Eve to be greeted by all my family and friends who had arranged a big party to welcome me home!" - **Miss Richardson**

"I remember getting an amazing scalextrics set when I was about 9. My dad had been up until one in the morning setting up the track and all the accessories!" - **Dr Henderson**

"Not all memories are happy! When I was 11, I was cast as Mary in the school nativity play, sadly Joseph flatly refused to put his arm around me in front of everyone - pure rejection, which has haunted me ever since!!" - **Mrs Nicholls**

"I always enjoyed having to search for Christmas presents that Santa would hide for me and my sister." - **Mrs Brennan**

"My best Christmas was when I was four and my uncle made me a doll's house." - **Mrs Robson**

"We moved from the south of England to North Yorkshire when my three children were quite small. It was always much warmer in the south. I'll never forget the look on their faces when we had our first-ever white Christmas!" - **Mrs Bissicks**

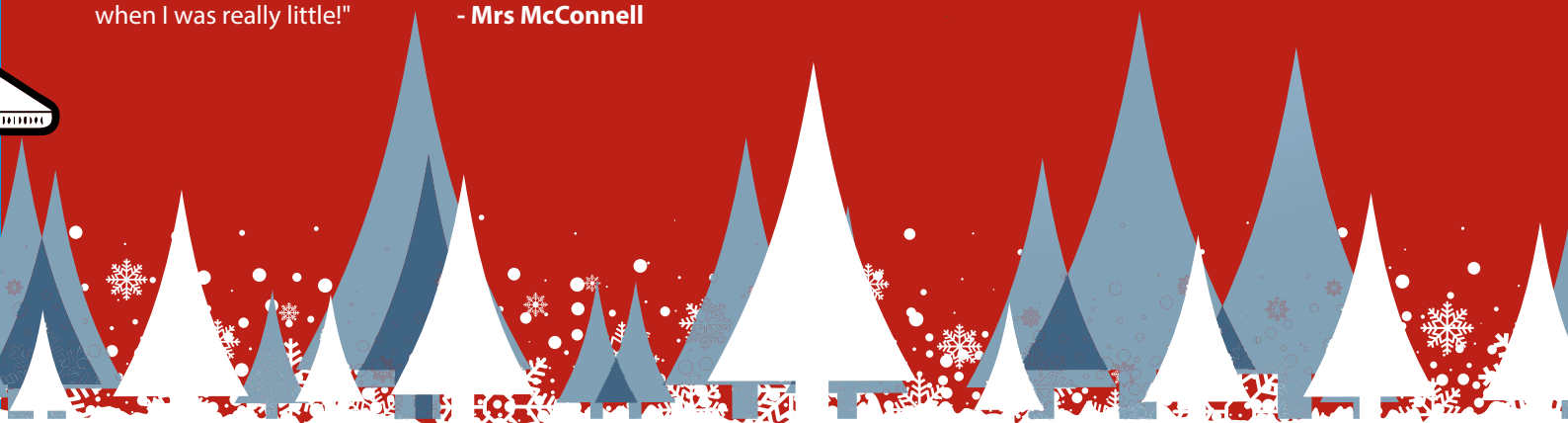
"Not really a best Christmas memory, but in the deep snow of 1981, my house in Manchester had a snow drift up to the first floor window. My brothers thought it would be funny to throw their four year old brother out of their 2nd floor bedroom window into the snow drift. I went straight through the snow and onto the garden and broke my leg! Not a happy Christmas with a pot on and my mum sent all of my brothers presents back to Santa..." - **Mr Pilling**

"The brass band I played with, Ferryhill Town Band, visited my house during their Christmas Eve carolling... they played under the streetlight and all my family and neighbours came out to watch us play." - **Mrs McGrath**

"Playing charades – without fail my dad always did the same one 'Gone with the Wind'. We'd all be falling around laughing before he even began his mime!" - **Ms Ellis**

"When I was about seven years old, I was given a kitten called Penny - she was a beautiful tortoiseshell and I had her for ten years. She used to sleep on my bed." - **Dr Gorlach**

"When I was little I remember playing Little Donkey on the guitar in the school nativity play... better than that, I was Mary when I was really little!" - **Mrs McConnell**



Young Musician of the Year competition

On Sunday 5 November, a number of our talented musicians and singers performed at the Rotary Club of Barnard Castle Young Musician of the Year competition.

Robbie Sammut (Year 7 - bassoon), Kirsty McLachlan (Year 9 - piano), Grace Tarpey (Year 10 - piano) Jake Knight (Year 11- piano and guitar) all performed in the instrumental category with Harriet Morris (Year 9 - piano) and Joe Sammut (Year 9 - clarinet) coming in 3rd and 2nd place respectively.

In the vocal category, Elizabeth Churchill (Year 8) and Kirsty McLachlan (Year 9) competed, with Harriet Morris (Year 9) coming in 2nd place with her moving rendition of 'On My Own' from Les Misérables.

Each of the students demonstrated excellent musicianship and we are very proud of their achievements.

Mewhort Scholarships awarded

Earlier this term, we were delighted to announce the winners of the Mewhort Scholarships for 2017.

The scholarship is a unique opportunity exclusive to sixth form students at Teesdale School who have achieved academic excellence and made a valuable contribution to the life of the school and wider community. Ella Blackburn was awarded the top prize of £1,500 for each year of her undergraduate study.

Ella's academic excellence was confirmed by her A*s in English literature and history and A in French. She is moving on to study history at St. Catharine's College Cambridge. The Mewhort Trustees were impressed with Ella's passion for the subject and the many ways she has engaged with it during her time at the school.

Sam Holmes, Katherine Harding, Kyle Ritchie and Alex Jeffries were each awarded £1,000 per year of undergraduate study. Sam's impressive science and maths ability shone through in his interview as did Alex's passion for improving farming and helping her local community.

Katherine has had a real impact throughout her time at the school helping younger students to achieve their goals and improve their confidence through performing arts whilst Kyle looks forward to a year of study in Spain as part of his Combined Honours degree.



Cambridge University seeks more applications from Teesdale students

Teesdale School and Sixth Form Centre was delighted to receive a letter from Cambridge University earlier this term, commending the performance of ex-student Emma Turner, who is studying Modern and Medieval Languages at the university's Robinson College.

The letter highlighted Emma's outstanding academic achievements in her first term and the role the teaching she had received from Teesdale has played in this. Commenting on Emma's time at Teesdale Sixth Form, Headteacher, Clare Ellis, said: "All of Emma's teachers said she was a delight to teach. Her dedication to her studies and commitment to both extra curricular activities and charitable work made her an outstanding role model and she embodied our school and sixth form ethos."

The letter went on to ask Teesdale Sixth Form if we would consider encouraging other students of Emma's calibre to apply to Cambridge and praising the role that our referencing had played in Emma's acceptance on the course.

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Film review

JUSTICE LEAGUE

by Daisy Goodwin

If you are looking for some entertainment this December, you could do worse than going along to see Justice League at the cinema.

The funny quips, tantalizing action sequences and the classic DC grittiness made Justice League by far one of the best films of the year (seconded only by Wonder Woman!).

This awesome film tells the story of Batman and Wonder Woman desperately trying to gather other superheroes to protect the world from the coming of Steppenwolf, an evil alien who has sworn vengeance

on the people of earth. However, The Flash, Aquaman and Cyborg are rather hesitant to throw themselves into the line of fire. And without Superman will they be able to stop Steppenwolf before he can destroy the world?

The film itself has an amazing plot and the classic DC superheroes have lost none of their valor or charisma. But the thing that really topped off Justice League was all the little inside jokes and reference that only comic book readers would understand. It made me feel like an excited child going to the cinema for the first time again.

Along with some amazing acting from pretty much the entire cast, especially Ezra Miller's portrayal of the somewhat reluctant at first Flash and Gal Gadot's purely spectacular Wonder Woman, I feel that this film was more than worth the price of admission. I give this film a straight five stars!



Duke of Edinburgh

In conjunction with our energetic neighbours, the TCR Hub, we are supporting students to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme in 2018.

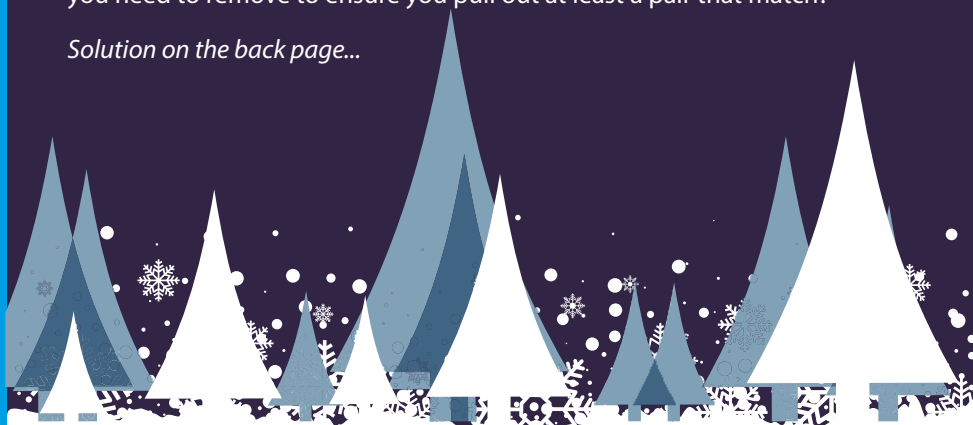
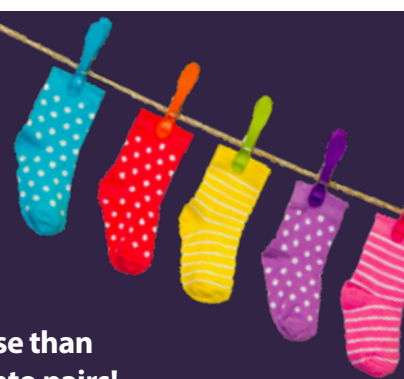
The Hub is currently recruiting at all levels - bronze, silver and gold - with a view to beginning the award in January 2018 with expedition training starting in February. There are limited places, so the sooner you register interest, the more likely it is you will gain a place on this prestigious programme. If you are lucky enough to be chosen, you will complete three sections in addition to an expedition - skill, volunteering and physical. To register your interest, please speak to Mrs Brennan or Rachel Tweddle at The TCR HUB.

Maths corner

Santa has run out of ideas this Christmas and instead of a heap of wonderful toys, he brings socks. Worse than that - he hasn't even matched them into pairs!

There are exactly 10 pairs of white socks and 10 pairs of black socks and he's left them in his sack. All the socks are exactly the same except for their colour. Reaching into the sack without looking, how many socks do you need to remove to ensure you pull out at least a pair that match?

Solution on the back page...



GCSE SUCCESS

At the very beginning of term, students gave the school a wonderful set of GCSE results to be proud of.

Overall 79% of students achieved a grade 4 or better in English, with 73% in mathematics. However, particularly impressive results were seen in maths with 30% of students achieving the new grade 7 and ten students going further still and gaining the best pass possible - a grade 9 - which will be awarded to just the top 3% of students nationally.

Stand out performances came from:

- Beth Windle – 3 Grade 9s, 6A*s
- Nina Holguin – 3 Grade 9s, 5A*s, 3As
- Laura Turner – 3 Grade 9s, 4A*s, 1A, 1B
- Daniel Gaskin – 1 Grade 9, 1 Grade 8, 1 Grade 7, 4A*s, 2As
- Henry Wood – 2 Grade 9s, 1 Grade 7, 2A*s, 3As
- Elsbeth Carr – 2 Grade 9s, 1 Grade 6, 5A*s, 1A
- John Bell – 1 Grade 9, 2 Grade 8s, 2A*s, 3As, 1B

Dr Janice Gorlach, our executive headteacher and Deputy CEO of the North East Learning Trust said:

"I am incredibly impressed with our young people who have worked so hard for their results. There is much to

celebrate not only in their academic achievements, but in their resilience and determination to do their very best."

Clare Ellis, our headteacher added: "We are thrilled with all of our results which are a testament to the dedication of our students and the care and support they receive from teachers, their parents and our close knit community. I am of course delighted for our most able performers with their clutch of grade 9s and A*s, but it also gives me great pleasure to see students who may have thought they hadn't done as well to realise that they have indeed passed and that they can begin the next chapter of their lives."

The results come in the first year of new English and maths awards, with traditional As, Bs and Cs replaced with numerical grades from 1-9.

Students win trip to the European Parliament

Talented sixth formers, Lucy Blackburn, Sadie Askwith, Scarlett Ballantine, Jenny Teward, Nina Holguin, Laura Turner and Bethany Windle, have won a trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg for the third year running.

The Europe-wide 'Euroscola' competition focuses students' attention on all matters to do with Europe and specifically the EU. It actively encourages discussion and debate on relevant issues which face some, if not all, European citizens.

For the last three years Teesdale students have entered Euroscola

by writing a film script as a team on an issue they have researched. This year their script focused on freedom of movement (especially in the light of Brexit). The script must incorporate other European languages and this year includes interviews in French, Spanish and Russian (much of this thanks to friendships established from the visit to Tallin earlier this year).

The script will be brought to life and filmed in a pop-up film studio in Newcastle, which is run as part of the educational programme of the Tyneside Cinema, and will be available on our website soon.

The highlight of the prize is a trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg where, along with students from the other 26 member states, students will hear MEPs debate the issues of the day. They will also debate current issues themselves (live streamed online on 22 March 2018) and even cast a vote for

'their country' - in many ways the visit is as close as students can get to having the experience of being an MEP!

In the past this visit has been inspiring for our students. Seeing simultaneous translation taking place was significant for Emma Turner who went on to study modern languages at Cambridge University and for Jack Parker who is taking a similar course at the University of Durham. Ella Blackburn, who has gone on to study history at Cambridge, was similarly inspired on her visit last year by speaking in the chamber to several hundred students.



Freedom City 2017

Well done to students from Teesdale School and across the North East Learning Trust for their successful Freedom City 2017 evening of music and art celebrating 50 years since Newcastle University awarded an honorary degree to Dr Martin Luther King.

On 13 November 1967, Newcastle University awarded Dr King the degree, the only UK university to do so in his lifetime. On accepting this award, Dr King made what was to be his final public speech outside of the US before his assassination in April 1968.



Freedom City 2017 brings together international artists, musicians, filmmakers, academics and community groups to inspire a new generation to contribute towards tackling the issues that Dr King spoke of in his acceptance speech.

The event, at Elvet Methodist Church in Durham, saw a keynote address by Dr Ben Houston, Senior Lecturer in Modern US History at Newcastle University, on the importance of King in 2017. The address was followed by music from students across the North East Learning Trust including Easington Academy and Shotton Hall Academy's chamber choirs, with an original composition by Teesdale student, Jake Knight. The event also saw the premiere of 'Memories of Dr King', a film featuring the grandmother of one of our Year 12 students, Nina Holguin, who met King in 1967 on his visit to the region. There was also an art exhibition inspired by King and his message, which featured some incredible works of art by students.

The event coincided with the publication of a special edition of their termly journal, Past to Present, which focuses on what there is to learn fifty years after King's visit to the region and features Professor Brian Ward of Northumbria University.

Careers day with a difference

Earlier this month, Teesdale School's entire Year 7 cohort visited East Durham College's Houghall Campus for a fun-packed careers day.

The recently redeveloped Durham-based campus, which is a leading provider of land-based training and education in the north of England, provided students with a unique taster of life after secondary school and a glimpse into the world of work.

During their action-packed day, students, guided by expert staff from Houghall, toured the new facilities including the small animal

care, agricultural, and equine centres. Along the way they met all manner of inquisitive creatures including pigs, horses, cows and even a tortoise called Sherman. They were also treated to a range of exhilarating activities including rope climbing amongst the trees with the college's tree surgery training team, where braver students could be seen suspended upside down well above the ground!

Ready for September 2018, plans are being developed to offer pre-16 students agricultural teaching in school together with placements at the Houghall campus. The college will be offering post-16 students improved free transport options as well as flexible timetables and changes to its curriculum to allow

more young people to access their agricultural courses.

To say thank you for such a great day out, every student in Year 7 wrote a personal thank you letter to staff at the college - let's hope they don't get lost amongst the post on its way to the North Pole at this time of year!



THE SPORTY BACK PAGE!

X country

Congratulations to our junior cross country teams who took part in the south west Durham championships recently where our junior boys' team (Years 8 and 9) won and the girls' team finished second.

Eight students have now been selected to represent the district as individuals at the County Durham Championships having finished in the top 16: junior girls; Tia Bell 13th, Alisha Bell 16th and junior boys; Nathan Mawer 3rd, George Peacock 6th, Joe Collings 7th and Lewis Porter 11th.

In the intermediate (Year 10 and 11) races Josh Mawer qualified finishing 4th and Will Wood 11th. Our only female intermediate was Anya Lee Deckhard who finished a credible 31st on a tough course.

Hays sponsor girls' kit

A huge thank you to Hays Travel in Barnard Castle who have kindly sponsored our Year 11 girls' netball team.

Following the successful sponsorship of our boys' football team last year, they decided it was now the girls' turn!

The picture shows our Year 11 team, who have won their league for the last two years, wearing their tops alongside the manager of Hays' local branch, Lucy Avery, and travel consultant Lynden. We hope that the new tops will help the girls to continue with their winning ways!



Solution to maths puzzle = 3

Futsal starter pack donation

Our school is geared up to start playing Futsal after receiving a free starter pack containing goals, futsal balls, bibs and coaching equipment.

The packs came courtesy of a £300,000 Futsal scheme, which is funded by the FA and delivered by the Football Foundation. They are designed to adapt existing sports halls, playgrounds and other hard surface facilities to make them Futsal-ready. Futsal is a five-a-side game, normally played on a flat indoor pitch with hockey-sized goals and a size four ball with a reduced bounce.

Michael Skubala, England Futsal Head Coach, said: "We want to get more people playing the sport for the love of it and who knows; perhaps we'll see some future international players unearthed as a result. Futsal is growing all the time and the FA, with the help of the Football Foundation, is dedicated to increasing its importance and popularity further for all."

Our PE teacher, Mr Pilling, said: "This equipment will contribute greatly to our students' extra curricular activities and the students are really looking forward to using it. We have also recently appointed a specialist sports coach who will be running lunchtime and after school clubs so this futsal equipment will provide a lot of enjoyment for the children who attend these clubs as well as contributing to PE lessons."

