



issue 1

# Ramsey Voice

Tony Lee Author Visit

Bugsy Malone

Orienteering

DEAR

The Maths Awards

# Notes from the Head

Welcome to the first edition of the electronic version of the Ramsey Voice newsletter. One of our priorities this year is to improve the communication between school, home and the local community allowing us to celebrate the success of our students. The articles in this newsletter provide a flavour of the range of activities that take place, demonstrating our commitment not only to good examination results but ensuring a range of opportunities to develop other skills and interests. A shorter hardcopy of this newsletter will also be available for those who do not have access to the internet.



We hope to produce the Ramsey Voice each half term. Your contribution to the content is welcome. Many of our students participate in activities outside school and we would like to recognise their achievements. Please send brief details to Mrs Gibbs (Assistant Headteacher) as well as suggestions for improvements to this newsletter or topics you would like included.

To improve communication we have introduced a variety of initiatives; the website is being re-developed to ensure it is more 'user friendly', but also being updated on a more regular basis and you can now follow us on Facebook and Twitter. A new electronic communications system has been installed to improve the efficiency of letters home. The majority of letters and items such as this newsletter will be emailed rather than printed. We feel this will ensure the information reaches you quickly as well as saving money, resources and time in producing the documents.

This term has been very busy as we have worked hard to build on the record breaking GCSE results achieved in the summer. As the new Headteacher I have spent time evaluating the strengths and areas for development within the school. As a result, a number of changes have been implemented which raise the aspirations and reinforce the high expectations we have of our students and staff. These include a new target setting system and development of our shared ethos and values. These can be seen on the last page of the newsletter.

Following a busy Open Evening, we are delighted that so many Year 6 pupils have applied to join The Ramsey Academy next September. As a result we fully expect to reach our published admission number.

Numerous projects to improve the facilities and learning environment are underway or have been completed during the term. Planning permission has been approved and orders have been placed to replace windows, cladding and roof on the Tower Block. Work is due to commence in January and scheduled for completion by Easter. All the cookers in Food Technology have been replaced and new sewing machines installed in Textiles. A 16 computer lap-top trolley has been located in Learning Support area and across the school 10 interactive whiteboards have been installed. We initiated the first 'Parent Forum' meeting and welcome anyone to attend future meetings to discuss topics which will allow us to improve our school.

Our message to students and staff has been clear this year 'Be the best you can be' and I am delighted that so many have displayed this attitude to learning. Every day we encourage our students to display the characteristics represented by the House names: Aspiration, Diversity and Endeavour so they can fulfil their potential. We have reminded them of the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

I hope through the Ramsey Voice you can see our contribution to ensuring our young people are engaging positively with their education in preparation for their future in our community.

Rob James  
Headteacher



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# Aspiration Charity Week 20-24th October 2014 - a huge success!

Charity Week is a new initiative for The Ramsey Academy, Halstead where each House has the task of raising money in aid of their chosen charity. Aspiration was the first House to host the special Charity Week; Diversity will follow in the Spring term in aid of Essex Air Ambulance and Endeavour in the Summer term in aid of PARC.

Students discussed in their form groups which charity they would like to support; overwhelmingly Aspiration students chose 'The Smile of Arran Fund', a new charity set up in memory of Arran Tosh, an inspirational 13 year old student from Sudbury who sadly died from a brain tumour. Several students from Ramsey knew Arran through football and music events.

Aspiration rose to the challenge magnificently to raise money in support of The Smile of Arran Fund which will help children who are diagnosed with cancer. We had set ourselves a target of £1,000 but would we achieve it? The House Captains, Hannah Page and Elizabeth McKean, not only rallied the form representatives into action, but also rattled buckets all week. The Sports Captains, Billy Carroll and Saffron Hewitt began organising the sporting events. Daily cake sales at morning break showed amazing talents in the kitchen and raised a tasty £225! Year 9 Aspiration students hit £60 alone! The FIFA 2015 tournament almost took the roof off with the noise - students paid to watch people playing on Xbox? Incredible! The basketball and netball matches of Year 11 students against the staff were extremely well-supported - the appearances of certain staff were definitely crowd pleasers, so a big thank you to Mr James, who also donned an oversized Aspiration T-shirt in the name of charity. The concert at Friday lunchtime packed the hall, where students sang, played and danced beautifully, not only to entertain staff and fellow students, but also to raise more funds. Mrs Judith Smith from Humes of Halstead Bakery kindly offered to bake a cake for the

occasion - complete with the Aspiration House logo - which was raffled to staff and raised another £80! The delicious cake was won by Ms Gerrard who shared it very generously at our next House meeting. Year 7 and 8 students joined the fun of the disco on Friday night and danced their way to the close of Charity Week, complete with a chocolate raffle and multi-coloured glow sticks.

Mrs Alison Tosh bravely joined Aspiration for their assembly to collect a cheque for £1201.20 and to thank the students for their outstanding efforts and generosity. So Aspiration would also like to thank all students, staff and parents for their generous contributions and help throughout a non-stop week, which enabled us to exceed our target.

Rosemary Sims  
Aspiration House Leader







# National Award

The improved GCSE results from 41% to 60% not only made The Ramsey Academy one of the most improved schools in Essex but nationally. This achievement was recognised when we were presented with a PIXL (Partners in Excellence) Award early in the term as one of the most improved schools in the country.

PIXL is a network of over 1200 schools, that work collaboratively to share good practice to raise standards.



# Cross Country

On Wednesday 19th November The Ramsey Academy, Halstead took 29 pupils to compete in the North West Essex District Cross Country at the Great Notley Country Park.

All pupils were a credit to the school with the effort they put in and their excellent conduct. With over 350 pupils competing across 12 schools, our pupils gave a great account of themselves, with each and every one of them contributing to our school's points total.

There were two outstanding performances from our school:

Jake Miller in Year 7 performed brilliantly finishing 7th out of 69 pupils running in his race.

James Walker in Year 11 ran superbly and also finished 7th in his race of 54 pupils.

Overall it was a highly enjoyable afternoon that left myself (Mr. Charlton), Mr Child and Miss Collins very proud.





# Sporting Success

National Trampolining competition at Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

Milly Jay and Bethany Warren were involved in a National Trampolining competition where they conducted themselves with great energy and sporting skill, both receiving certificates for their achievements.



## Table Tennis

Table Tennis Club

Well done to all the students who have regularly attended this year. The Club has just received 4 new indoor tables and is also awaiting 2 new outdoor tables that will hopefully be in use at break and lunchtimes in the New Year. We would like to thank the Jack Petchey foundation for providing the school with such amazing resources.

The club is available to all students and is led by an experienced Table Tennis England coach. Our club is sponsored by Chelsea football Club as part of their work in the community and work with Premier League 4 sport. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dean Andrews (coach) and Thomas Gooder (Chelsea FC) for all their support and hard work in providing our students with regular high quality activities. The KS4 team will be representing Chelsea in a Premier league table tennis tournament in mid-January. We wish them all the best.

If anyone is interested in attending the club it runs on Monday evenings from 3pm- 4pm, 4pm- 5pm and a post 16 club from 5pm-6pm. Please see Mr Taylor for any other details.



# Tony Lee Author Visit

On Tuesday 18th November, New York Number. 1 best-selling author Tony Lee came to The Ramsey Academy and gave wonderful talks to students across Yrs. 7, 8 and 10.

The talks were very intriguing as they delved into the making of interesting stories filled with exciting characters created by the students themselves. The story itself was very funny and interactive as students could add ideas to form a base for it. The story was about five vampires who had come to terrorise and kill the people stuck inside the school. Those were the students. This gave us many ideas about what we would all do in this situation: some would stay inside the school and hope their best friend would have their back; others didn't trust anyone in their group so they wanted to resort to letting the vampires inside; while some of us actually wanted to become vampires!

This activity taught us about what certain people would do in these situations and who we might trust in these scenarios. It all came down to electing a leader who would keep

everybody safe and in line. Eight people volunteered for this, each having very different ideas; most being about toilets! I ran for leadership as I thought my idea would certainly keep everybody safe, (every person stay in the English area and you're not to leave it). Myself and Taylor Nicholson were the final two candidates; it was up to the students to vote who became leader: I lost by two votes. I can't help but think this was a big mistake! I even said to the class - if you don't vote for me I'll let the vampires in!

At lunch time Mr Lee was still entertaining students in the library as he talked about stories of famous people that he has met and experiences he has had as an author. All were very funny and interesting.

Tony Lee's visit was both fun and educational and I and my peers cannot wait for him to come back to our school and grace us with another lively and wonderful story.

Jack Hawes  
Year 10







# Maths Awards

Congratulations!

Each half term the Mathematics Faculty present 2 Mathematics Awards for each year group.

The Awards are given in recognition of students who have either made exceptional progress; achieved outstanding results; shown a high level of motivation or commitment; shown resilience and improvement or have excelled in their leadership skills within the Mathematics Faculty.

We would like to congratulate the following students for their effort and achievements between September and October 2014.

Year 7

Emily Williamson  
Phoebe Warren

Year 8

Tamara Collins  
Maisie Cobourn

Year 9

Jack Morgan  
Katie Nicholls

Year 10

Halimah Babor  
Emma Gooden

Year 11

Scott Bryant  
Harry Parker-Stone

# Maths Events

We were selected to attend the Essex Royal Institution Mathematics Master Classes at the King Edward VI Grammar School participating in Mathematics workshops. This is A-level work so we were grateful to be invited. So far we have attended two master classes and there are more to attend to in the future. Here are our accounts of two we have attended.

The first master class that Kai and I attended was great. We learnt about the history of cryptography, steganography and ciphers. These are to do with code cracking. These methods are still used today. We learnt how the maths relates to the coding. I found it easy to understand the logic behind the problems.

(Katie Nicholls, Year 9)

The second class we attended was very influential. We learnt about binary and the story of Josephus Flavius. He was commander of Galilee in the Roman era and, surrounded by the Romans in a cave, he and his men, instead of getting brutally tortured by the Romans, decided on a method to kill each other. Out of forty one men only two survived including Josephus. We investigated this method and found a way to survive on purpose. We tried this method and others with our teacher. He taught us binary and it only took 5 minutes to solve. Brilliant!

(Kai Thrower, Year 9)









# Gardening Club

The Ramsey Gardening Club has gone from strength to strength since its resurrection in February of this year. With a membership of three, we started to clear the overgrown site and found huge areas of concrete and broken glass just below the surface. Raised beds were the logical solution, so we adapted those that had been put together a year before by builders that had been working at the school.

Spring saw a productive greenhouse pushing out seedlings which we sold or planted in the raised beds. We grew broad beans, tomatoes, spring onions, strawberries, sweetcorn and a range of flowers.

The summer saw us complete a picket fence all around our site. Members fabricated the panels and archway from scratch. Everywhere was planted up by the end of term.

Students came back into school during the holiday to meet judges from 'Anglia In Bloom' and 'Britain In Bloom'. Our allotment garden formed part of the 'Halstead In Bloom' entries for these national competitions. The judges were very impressed and their positive feedback on our efforts reflected the hard work put in. We were awarded a certificate from

the Royal Horticultural Society as part of the 'Improving Your Neighbourhood' campaign. We were deemed to be 'thriving'.

The club has signed up to the 'RHS School Gardening Campaign' and has achieved the first two of their Five Star awards. We are working towards the next three!

We were very successful in a fundraising project, making wooden pumpkins to sell. We raised £120 and appeared in the local press. A number of tools have been ordered for our younger and smaller members to use. Noah Parkinson has received a Jack Petchey award which brings with it £200 to spend on the gardening club. By January we will be fully kitted out with new tools for all to use. We are giving thought to new projects and ideas to develop the site further.

Steve Pittuck, our adult organiser, has received a trophy from 'Halstead In Bloom' for services to gardening in the town and community. This is a reflection of all the hard work put in by the club this year. Our numbers are now in the mid-twenties. We are all looking forward to the spring and a productive year in the garden!





# Ramsey Social Media

Come and visit us on social media!

The Ramsey Academy, Halstead is now on Facebook and Twitter. You can access our FB page and Twitter account at:

<http://www.twitter.com/ramseyacademy>

<https://www.facebook.com/ramseyacademy>

Please have a look at the photographs, articles and posts. Links can be found from the school website.



**The Ramsey Academy**  
Halstead, Essex

## Christmas Concert

Wednesday 17th December 2014

6.30 pm

Free admission by ticket only

Available from Mr. Lewis-James

# Berlin Educational Visit

Berlin Educational Visit July 14th -17th 2014  
Berlin was the trip of a lifetime, which I will remember for a very long time! I am so grateful to all the staff for making it possible. After an early start on Monday morning, the final checks were completed and I waved goodbye to my family to set off for Southend International Airport. I was scared of flying because it was my first time, but our team was so supportive and the flight only lasted one hour 40 minutes.

Touching down in Berlin and meeting our tour guide was like nothing I had ever done before. Loading the coach with all our bags was so funny, because some people's bags were massive, even though we were only there for 4 days! We enjoyed the tour through the city to the Hotel Meininger, seeing the differences between old East and West Berlin. On the way we saw a stripy hotel and parts of the Berlin Wall.

Our hotel room was great - we had bunk beds and our own shower room - just like on the website!

We visited the Fernsehturm (TV Tower) on the first evening and saw the dramatic view of Berlin from 300 metres in the air! On Tuesday we walked by the River Spree through the Government District (Regierungsviertel) and were lucky enough to see at very close range the victorious German World Cup team parade through the city and also the Reichstag and the huge main station. We even climbed to the top of the Reichstag dome at sunset! My favourite visits were to the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp and the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, because they were a big eye-opener for me. After reading about how hard life was for people when Berlin was separated into East and West sections, and also what desperate lengths people would risk in order to reach freedom, it made me realise how easy my life is in comparison.

On our final day, we went to the Babelsberg

Filmpark where a range of different films have been shot. Here we had our final celebration meal in a mediaeval themed restaurant. The food was great, but it was sad as it meant we were going home! Our flight from Berlin Schoenefeld was slightly delayed, but we touched down in England at 10.30 in the evening. I was so excited on the coach on the way home to see my family again. It was rather chaotic getting all our luggage off the coach and I was so tired when I got home.

Berlin was an amazing trip and it was great to share the experience with the school, the teachers and my friends. However I will just have to go back again to Berlin to see even more of the city.

Sian Lawrence

Year 11.









# Orienteering

On Saturday 15th November, 10 of the Ramsey Academy Orienteering Team made the journey to Leeds to compete in the British Schools Orienteering Championships. Schools from all over Great Britain came to take part in this National event, making the competition fierce. After staying a night in a Travelodge hotel, we arrived at Temple Newsam.

The event itself was set in the parkland of Temple Newsam House. Our first competitor, Kaitlyn Draper, set off on her course at 10:29, followed by Callum Turner, Georgia Gower, Tommy Harrington, Lucy Edwards, Hannah Peters and Beth Lucas (running as a pair), Thomas Turner, Thomas Lock and Abbie Forster. The course itself was very muddy and

hilly, however the area was stunning. After we had all completed our courses successfully, we had a nervous wait for the results. The year 10 girls' team (Kaitlyn, Lucy, Georgia and Abbie), won a bronze medal, coming 3rd in the country. Overall in the secondary small school category the Ramsey Academy came 4th which, considering that some members of the team had not been orienteering for long, was a great result!

None of this would have been possible without the help of Julie Edwards (coach), Mr. Taylor and Julie Laver for setting up training sessions and helping us to achieve the best possible result. Thanks also to Simon and Sharon Turner for their help on the day.





# House News

## Aspiration House News

Our role in school is to run the House Council. We also organise upcoming events and most importantly, we pass on your views via the Student Management Team.

Recently we organised the first ever Ramsey Charity week, raising £1201.20 for the Smile of Arran Fund; this total is still rising! This term Hannah won the Jack Petchey Award for her contribution to the School and House community and has £200 to spend on the House. We have chosen to buy our House mascot; a plaque to display names of all House Captains and some tabards for students for House sports events.

Hannah Page and Elizabeth McKean  
Aspiration House Captains



## Endeavour News

Together we run the House meetings where we listen and gather the views of the Endeavour students. We act as the student voice for Endeavour.

As a group we have chosen PARC Braintree as our nominated charity this year. PARC are found at the Discovery Centre and provide play opportunities for children with physical and learning difficulties. Our charity week will be based on raising money for PARC; this will be at the start of the summer term. We are proud to be members of Endeavour House and enjoy participating in the many events and appeals that take place.

Millie Cooper-Britland and Adam Peakall  
Endeavour House Captains

## Diversity House News

We stood for the positions because we wanted to ensure that the voices of pupils were heard as well as to have the opportunity to work with other pupils and teachers. We want to help make Diversity House and the school the best it can be.

This year the House voted to raise money for The Essex Air Ambulance. This will be done during our House charity week next year and will be a great chance to show support, by baking cakes and other events. We are really looking forward to supporting this vital charity.

Georgia Heard and Dylan Peakall  
Diversity House Captains



# Awards Evening

On Thursday 27 November The Ramsey Academy, Halstead held its annual awards evening where the achievements of the students who left the Academy in the summer were celebrated.

Students were presented with their GCSE certificates and a number of subject and special awards were given.

The awards were presented by Mr Rob James (Headteacher) and Mr Dan Gee (former

Headteacher) who spoke about the pride the school and the community have in these young people who achieved the best results in the school's history.

It was a wonderful evening with staff, students, parents, governors and friends having the opportunity to recognise the achievements of all.

Calum Leys  
Deputy Headteacher



# Appeal from Pathway

If anyone is having a pre-Christmas clear out, Pathway are in need of some Playstation 2 controllers. Also, any board games suitable for

ages up to 12 years would be much appreciated. Thank you.



# Quiz Night

The Ramsey Academy, Halstead held a Quiz Night on December 5th in aid of our charities. The event was very well attended with 15 teams competing for the coveted title of Ramsey Quiz Masters. As the rounds went by, several teams were neck and neck. Quiz compere, Alan Elsbury was ably assisted in his task by scorer, Karen Riddleston who ensured an accurate and prompt outcome. At the end it came to the wire

with 'Life of Pi' and 'Fact Finders' left to answer a tie breaker question to decide the outright winner. In the end, 'Life of Pi' were victorious with the correct tie break answer. A wonderful time was had by all. Many thanks go out to: Mrs Sims; Ms Riddleston; Mrs Harvey; Mrs Jupp and Mr Elsbury for organising a superb event.

## DEAR

DEAR time - Drop Everything and Read - has been a fixture of the Ramsey Academy week for some time. Once a week, all members of the school community stop what they are doing and read for 20 minutes. This initiative is championed by the National Literacy Trust and can be found in many UK schools. Reading is a hugely important skill, bringing both pleasure and interest to adults and children alike. DEAR. The Ramsey Academy is committed to promoting reading for pleasure and relaxation as a lifelong skill and personal development opportunity. Each newsletter we will feature members of staff and students reading. This newsletter features Mr Brooking from the Science Faculty reading 'Guy Martin', the autobiography.



## Dates for your Diary...

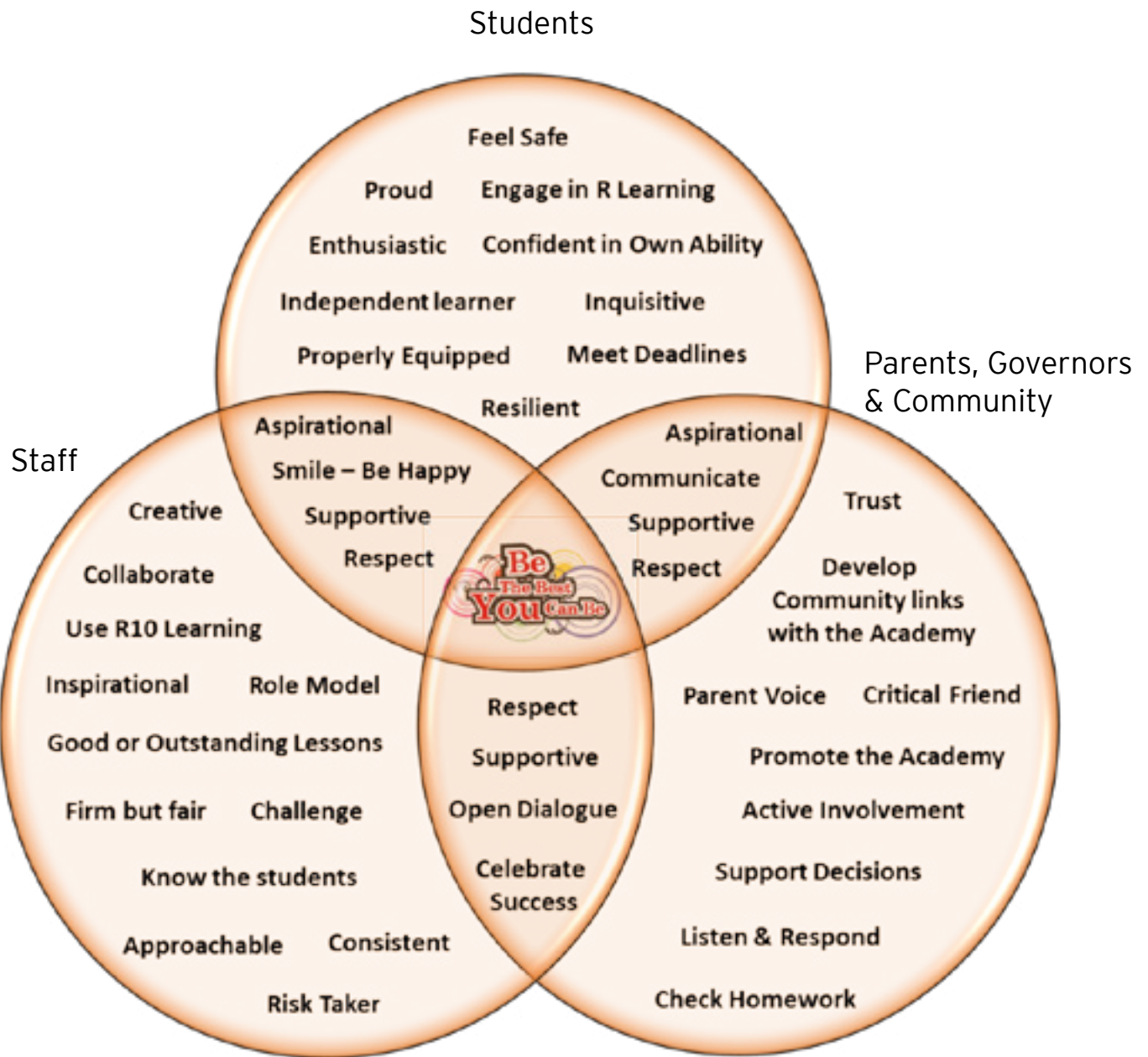
Dec  
19th - Last Day of Term  
22nd - 2nd - Christmas Break

Jan  
5th Non Student Day  
6th - Students Return  
8th - Year 9 Parents evening  
9th - Year 11 Mock Results

Feb  
2nd - 20th - Year 10 exams  
5th - Intermediate Maths Challenge  
10th - Year 11 Art Trip



# Be The Best You Can Be



Aspiration, Diversity, Endeavour

