



# SBL Academy On the Radar



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## Happy New Year!

Collaboration or working together is something we treasure at SBL and is one of the four key values of the Futura Learning Partnership. This is celebrated through one of the wonderful murals painted by Mr Pickering in the main school corridor (pictured below). The importance of teamwork is captured by Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, who coined the phrase 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'. In other words, the outcome is better when the individual parts work together. An inspiring example from nature which beautifully illustrates this point is when migratory birds fly together in a 'V' formation. By doing so, the aerodynamic benefits of flying in the slip stream of the birds in front mean that the birds fly further, faster and use less energy than if they were flying alone.



## Key dates

**18 January:** Year 11 parents and carers evening  
**24 & 30 January:** Post-16 evening  
**6 February:** SEND parents and carers evening  
**6 March:** Year 8 HPV  
**23 April:** Year 9 MenACWY/DTP  
**25 June:** Year 9 HPV clinic for students that missed vaccination in Year 8



The importance of collaboration is the overarching theme which I have chosen for this school year, reflected by our mantra of 'the power of the collective'. There have been so many examples from the first two terms that demonstrate the strength of teamwork at SBL, such as our very successful open evening in October when over 200 students acted as tour guides and curriculum ambassadors to show off our wonderful school at its best. Our sports teams, especially the Year 8 girls football team, have done particularly well in the national cup and other competitions so far this year. The calm and purposeful corridors and classrooms at SBL are the result of staff and students committing to our clear and consistent ready to learn system. Another example, would be the moving and dignified whole school act of remembrance in November when students and staff came together to

remember the sacrifice made by our service men and women. The collection of over 700 items of food before Christmas for the Kingswood food bank thanks to the generosity of our community was particularly heartening. Our talented musicians and performers came together to produce a brilliant Christmas concert in the last week of Term 2. The list of examples of effective teamwork could go on!

The crucial three-way partnership between school, home and the individual student is another demonstration of the importance of collaboration. We place great value in developing constructive, positive and trusting relationships with parents so that together we can best support every young person. I would like to thank parents for supporting the school in this way and working in unison with us to maintain our high expectations of student attendance, uniform, behaviour and effort, especially with home study.

Being stronger together is also demonstrated by SBL's partnership with the Futura family of schools. I believe that the potential merger with the Olympus Trust presents an exciting opportunity to form a larger trust which has the resources, economies of scale and financial resilience which will bring great benefit for our young people. I will keep you updated with any developments as talks between Futura and Olympus progress.

All of these examples, and there are many more, show that special things happen when we work together and harness the power of the collective. This fills me with hope and promise for what the SBL community can achieve during 2024 and beyond!

All the best,

**Robin Bassford, Headteacher**

# SBL Christmas Concert

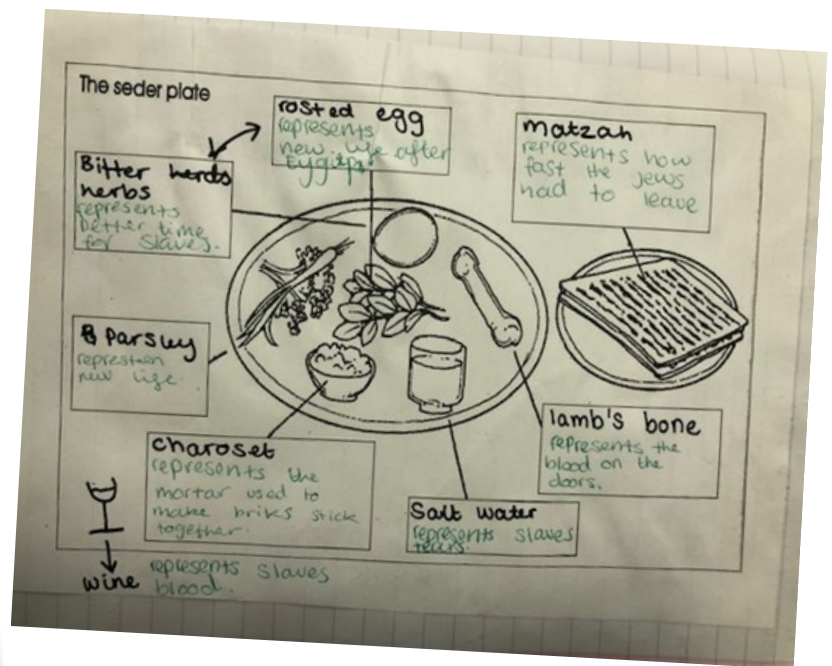
In the final week before the Christmas holiday SBL's annual Christmas concert celebrated the festive season and the creative endeavours of our students. In the afternoon we welcomed students from several of our local primary schools who were given their own performance, and who joined in enthusiastically with the tunes they knew!

In the evening over sixty SBL students performed to a sold-out audience. We were treated to seasonal favourites such as the choir's rendition of 'All I want for Christmas', as well as some less typical Christmas numbers, including 'The Piña Colada Song' and a Led Zeppelin guitar solo. It was great to have the musical performances complemented by several seasonal dramatised readings, including the Drama club's performance of 'The Night Before Christmas'.



We are very grateful for the generous donations made by audience members towards the school's music department. These coupled with ticket sales raised over £300 that will be invested in new keyboards for all students to use in music lessons within school. We look forward to the next showcase of musical talent in our summer concert.

**Mr Alderson, Curriculum Team Leader, Creative & Media**



## Tasting History: Students Sample Passover

Year 7 students have been learning about the Jewish festival of Passover as part of their work learning about the origins and significance of Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)

Learning over recent lessons has been on the importance of Abraham and Moses. Students have learnt about Moses and his role in leading the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt via the Red Sea.

Students have learnt about what Jews do today to remember Moses through the festival of Passover. A central part of Passover is the Seder meal when different foods and drinks are consumed to remember what Moses did. For example, parsley is dipped in salt water before being eaten to symbolise the tears of the slaves and during lessons some students had a go at tasting this as well as looking at a Seder plate (see photo)

The photos show the Seder plate, a Passover Haggadah (similar to a service book) and a Seder plate labelled by a student.

**Mr P Hill**

## Year 9 Pathways Process

Information has been sent to all parents/carers of Year 9 students regarding the KS4 Pathways process that will take place this term for your daughter/son. This is the process where we support you to choose the subjects for your child for Key Stage 4 which will be examined in spring/summer of 2026.

All key information can be found on the [Year 9 Pathways website](#).

We look forward to seeing you at the various in-person and virtual meetings that will be held in the weeks ahead as we try to support you as you make these important decisions for your child's future.

## Teaching and learning at SBL Academy

Last term I had the privilege to speak to students from all year groups about their experience of lessons at SBL Academy. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive and you can see a summary of some of their comments below. It was great to hear how much students enjoy their lessons at SBL and all of the ways in which their teachers help them learn so effectively.

**Mr Jones, Assistant Headteacher**

# SBL Shooting Stars!

## Year 7

- "I love the stories in History and all the practicals in Science" Arlo
- "The fact that we have lots of English lessons means that I have the time to really improve my work" Millie

## Year 8

- "I love PE because it really helps me to be active"
- "I love expressing my imagination in English and Art and presenting it in a way I'm really proud of." Esmé
- "In Spanish, lots of support and feedback mean my work is really good." Phoebe

## Year 9

- "In Technology, we make loads of cool stuff and the teachers get everyone involved." Megan
- "In Maths, Mrs Watts always knows what mistakes we might be making and helps us to understand things."

## Year 10

- "I really like the small classes in Science, Sociology and Maths as you get more support for the tricky topics."

## Year 11

- "In Psychology, Ms Sharp really enjoys talking about theories and studies which makes it more enjoyable."
- "In History, Miss Gilkerson gets us to process information into things like summary tables which means we remember things better."
- "In English, Miss Roberts translates what we're reading in a way we can understand."
- "Mr Fuller makes English fun and he is really good at explaining things."
- "Miss Hall helps me understand what I need to do. She makes things interesting because when she's reading, she puts so much into it that it makes me want to learn more."

# Humanities Teachers Top Books ...

## History

### Year 7

*The Seeing Stone* by Kevin Crossley-Holland: Follows the story of a young page to a knight.

*1066 (I was There...)* by Jim Eldridge Step back in to the battlefields of Hastings which places the reader at the heart of history.

### Year 8

*Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson explores the harsh world of the slave trade through the eyes of Isabel, a young girl seeking freedom amidst the challenges and complexities of her enslaved life.

*Pastworld* by Ian Beck immerses readers in a thrilling Victorian theme park where Jack the Ripper resurfaces. The novel intertwines mystery and historical elements, creating a captivating narrative within the unique setting of this immersive, dark amusement park.

### Year 9

*47 Days: The True Story of Two Teen Boys Defying Hitler's Reich* tells the true and heart-wrenching stories of Lilly and Günter struggling with the terror-filled reality of life in the Third Reich, each embarking on their own dangerous path toward survival, freedom, and ultimately each other.

*Lies We Tell Ourselves* by Robin Talley unravels the intertwining lives of Sarah Dunbar and Linda Hairston, the first African American students in an all-white high school during the Civil Rights Movement. The novel delves into identity, love, and resilience amid societal upheaval, offering a poignant glimpse into personal transformation.

## Geography

### Year 7

*I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai tells the remarkable true story of a girl who knew she wanted to change the world – and did.

*Boy 87* by Ele Fountain is the story of a boy who must leave his home and family after armed soldiers come knocking at his door.

### Year 8

*Refugee Boy* by Benjamin Zephaniah tells the story of Alem, a refugee who must learn to fend for himself in London.

*No one is too small to make a difference* by Greta Thunberg contains Greta's speeches from across Europe encouraging all to fight the climate crisis.

### Year 9

*Factfulness* by Hans Rosling – using data and facts about the world the author reveals that the world is in a much better state than we often believe.

*Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman is a novel set in a dystopian Britain in which society is divided by racism.

## Values and Beliefs

### Year 8

*The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis is a classic children's fantasy novel that takes readers on a magical journey through a wardrobe into the enchanting world of Narnia where four siblings must battle the evil witch and restore the rightful ruler to the throne. Many people believe the story represents the triumph of Jesus over evil.

Set in 2002, *A Very Large Expanse Of Sea* takes readers on a clever and humorous love story between two Americans who come from different backgrounds. Shirin, a 16 year old Muslim girl living in post 9/11 America, and Ocean James, her lab partner.

### Year 9

*Muhammad Ali His Life and Times* by Thomas Hauser is seen as the classic Ali biography. It explains his faith and conversion to Islam and his journey to become the greatest.



## Tudor time travel: a history-packed trip to Hampton Court

Our trip to Hampton Court was an immersive journey through the history of Tudor England. The highlight of the trip, our guided tour through the infamous Henry VIII's apartments, gave us an insight into not only the history of the estate but also the extravagant lifestyle of Henry and his children. Our visit to his extension of the Manor, the great hall that was built as a wedding gift for his second wife, Anne Boleyn, who he had executed before it was finished, and through the hallways of the apartments gave us a view on the thrones living in the 16th Century. The tapestries hung up in the great hall of Abraham was said to not been touched since Henry's death which dated back hundreds of years and shows the pristine state the Manor was kept in. Our analysis of sources dating back to the Tudor era also has given us beneficial information we can adapt into our own learning.

During our trip we also witnessed how in the Tudor times during its great religious reformation, the belief of always being watched was used by Henry and his successors to keep people loyal to them. The decoration of head carvings around the roof and walls of the palace gave the impression that you were always being watched, and this proved to show why many people stayed loyal to the throne out of fear. Other parts of the palace like the original carvings of Roman Emperors had been kept on the manor after Henry took the estate from Cardinal Wolsey to help Henry's lies that the Tudors had been around longer than they had and fed his belief of his divine right to rule over England. The trip to Hampton Court not only provided a visual feast of Tudor architecture and artistry but also deepened my understanding of the dynamic historical forces that unfolded within the palace, making it a truly enriching and educational experience and providing a level of knowledge we can use during our studies in school.

**William Burns, Year 12**



# December Food Bank Collection



Thank you to staff who organised and to everyone who donated to Decembers food bank collection.

Six cars journeys delivered approximately 700 items to The Kingswood Food Bank, part of the Trussell Trust.

## Home Study Club

- Mon, Wed & Thurs
- 3:05 – 4:00
- Library

*Work independently*

*Ask for some help*

*Use the laptops*

