

Dear parents and carers,

Please see below this week's Chesterton blog. We hope you enjoy reading the updates from departments and teams across the school.



Thank you so much to all our staff and students for their ongoing hard work.

The team at Chesterton are always keen to hear from parents who'd like to get involved with school life: please don't hesitate to get in touch if this is true for you.

All the best for a restful weekend.

Rolf Purvis
Executive Headteacher

Chesterton Debate Club

Wednesdays, 3:15pm–4:15pm

Rex Freeman Hall

Open to all students

Through laughter-filled games, more structured debates in different formats, and taking part in national competitions, learn skills to help you build confidence in:

- using your voice to make a case
- disagreeing with people effectively
- grabbing and holding an audience's attention
- persuading through logic and storytelling

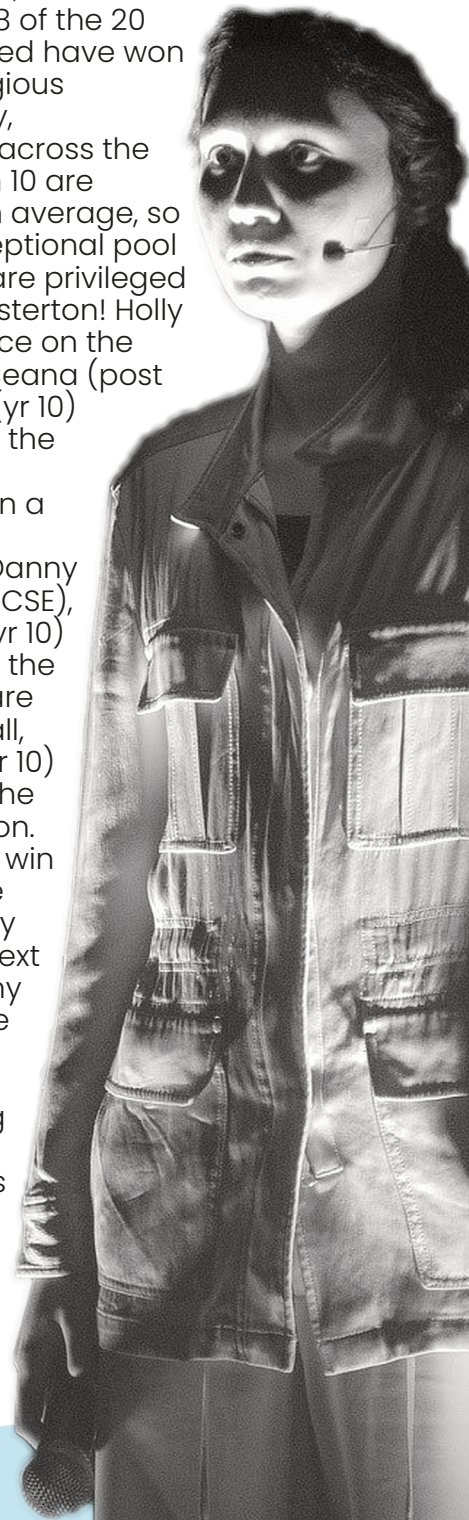
No experience necessary – just turn up with an open mind and expect it to be fun!

Any questions, please ask Mr N Jones.



National Youth Theatre Places Galore!

A huge congratulations to Chesterton Youth Theatre members who auditioned for National Youth Theatre this year in a day workshop/1 - 1 interview held in the Atrium Theatre and drama studio last term. Since that time, results have been published, and we're thrilled to hear that 8 of the 20 actors who auditioned have won places in this prestigious company! Nationally, thousands audition across the country and only 1 in 10 are awarded a place on average, so this reflects the exceptional pool of acting talent we are privileged to have here at Chesterton! Holly (yr 11) has won a place on the Newcastle course; Ceana (post GCSE) and Harleen (yr 10) have won places on the Birmingham course; Danny (yr 9) has won a place on the Bristol course; and finally, Danny and Sammy (post GCSE), Laurie and Charlie (yr 10) have won places on the London course: we are delighted for them all, and also for Shira (yr 10) who is currently on the Reserve list for London. For those who didn't win a place this year, we very much hope they will audition again next year: as with so many challenges in life, the more practice you have, the closer you come to the winning goal. We hope the students with places have a fantastic summer devising with NYT, and that this will prove to be a turning point in their careers as theatre makers!



Coming up Next Week at the Atrium Theatre, Chesterton Community College!!

A Very Simple Story by Maria Lado

Founded in 2017 by a group of Russian-speaking expatriates living in Cambridge, the amateur company Theatrus draws inspiration from the rich Eastern European theatrical heritage. Their debut production in 2019, *Wives* by Elena Isayeva, was a dreamlike, fantastical play exploring the inner worlds of the wives of famous Russian authors — women who played pivotal roles in their celebrated husbands' creative journeys and personal lives. The performance, that wove together imagination and historical insight, was directed by Lithuanian theatre professional Dmitry Turchaninov and earned praise for its emotional depth and inventive staging.

Following a nearly three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company returned in December 2024 with Turchaninov's version of *A Very Simple Story*, a play by Ukrainian author Maria Lado.

Set on a farm and told from the perspective of domestic animals, this allegorical play explores the human condition as it unfolds in the face of wealth and want, love and hatred, birth and death. Theatrus is now performing two additional shows of *A Very Simple Story* at the Atrium Theatre of Chesterton Community College in preparation for a festival of amateur theatre companies in Stockholm in late May.

Staff and students of Chesterton can enjoy a discounted ticket for £5 with the password: 'CCCAVSS525' on booking.

- **Tickets:** <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-atrium-theatre/a-very-simple-story/e-egbrbj>
- **Running time:** 2 hours (with a 15-minutes' interval).
- **Accessibility:** This play is performed in the Russian language with English subtitles.
- **Age Guidance:** 12+
- **Date:** 10th May and 18th May, 6.30 pm
- **Where:** Atrium Theatre, Chesterton Community College, CB4 3NY



Athletics Club Takes Off!

The first eight days of Athletics have already brought incredible excitement to both our students and teachers. Over 100 students attended Athletics Club on Tuesday, just on the second day! A few highlights include the Year 8 students competing in High Jump for the first time this year, and a standout performance by Isla N, who set a new personal best of 1.32m in the club this week. Additionally, Isla H and Amelia both broke the school's Year 8 girls' records, achieving 1.42m during their PE lesson. Well done! We're all excited to see what the rest of the season holds.

As a quick reminder, last year Chesterton finished in second place, just behind Perse School, in the Jubilee Cup, the most prestigious athletics school competition in Cambridgeshire.



Sixth Form

On the back of completing mock exams, students in Y12 have begun their reflection process with teachers and tutors to ensure appropriate actions are in place for the remainder of the term to aid further progress.

In enrichment, they have also enjoyed the amazing weather with students getting together to play rounders on Jesus Green as well as some taking up urban sketching where they headed to Castle Mound to draw the Cambridge skyline as well as Histon Road Cemetery.

Yesterday, students who are headed to Kenya took part in a cultural awareness and Swahili session to help prep for their upcoming trip that departs on the 16th!

Our Y13 students seem highly focused and are making the most of guided revision sessions with teachers and engaging well with their own schedules and approaches to revision.

We wish all of our students who are involved with art and modern language oral exams next week the very best of luck!

'Dear England' – a 'Back-of-the-Net' Theatre Trip!

On Monday evening, a party of 50 students from Years 9 and 11 were taken by the drama teachers to see 'Dear England' at the Royal National Theatre in London. The trip was, in part, a revision exercise for Year 11(!) in that they are going to be evaluating the Show as part of their GCSE drama written exam on 8th May! They were previously taken to see the Olivier-award winning play in November, 2023, so when the National Theatre announced they would be reviving the production with a new cast, it was an 'easy win'! The play, which focuses on the development of the England football team under Gareth Southgate, has also been updated to reflect its recent history, so it was fascinating for the Year 11s to notice the differences between this version and the previous.

Meanwhile, the Year 9s saw the production for the first time, and many expressed a sense of awe at its impact, particularly the sequence in which England wins a penalty shoot-out, which is staged just before the interval with a mimed football! It was thrilling to see students literally throwing their hands into the air as they imagined the ball being kicked into the 'missing fourth wall' goal. The RNT kindly gave Chesterton upgraded seats in the stalls for £10 each, which shows that theatre can be accessible to all; we're also taking Year 10 students to see 'Dear England' later this month, so that they don't miss out on account of their mocks!

Meanwhile, everyone will have the chance to experience a form of James Graham's play because it is currently being adapted for a four-part television series. For now, the Chesterton group should feel very proud of the way they conducted themselves in London and responded to this thrillingly entertaining and emotive piece of theatre about overcoming fear, and we wish the Year 11s the best of British luck with their exam!



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'Mary Poppins' – a Breakth-Taking Night of Magic!

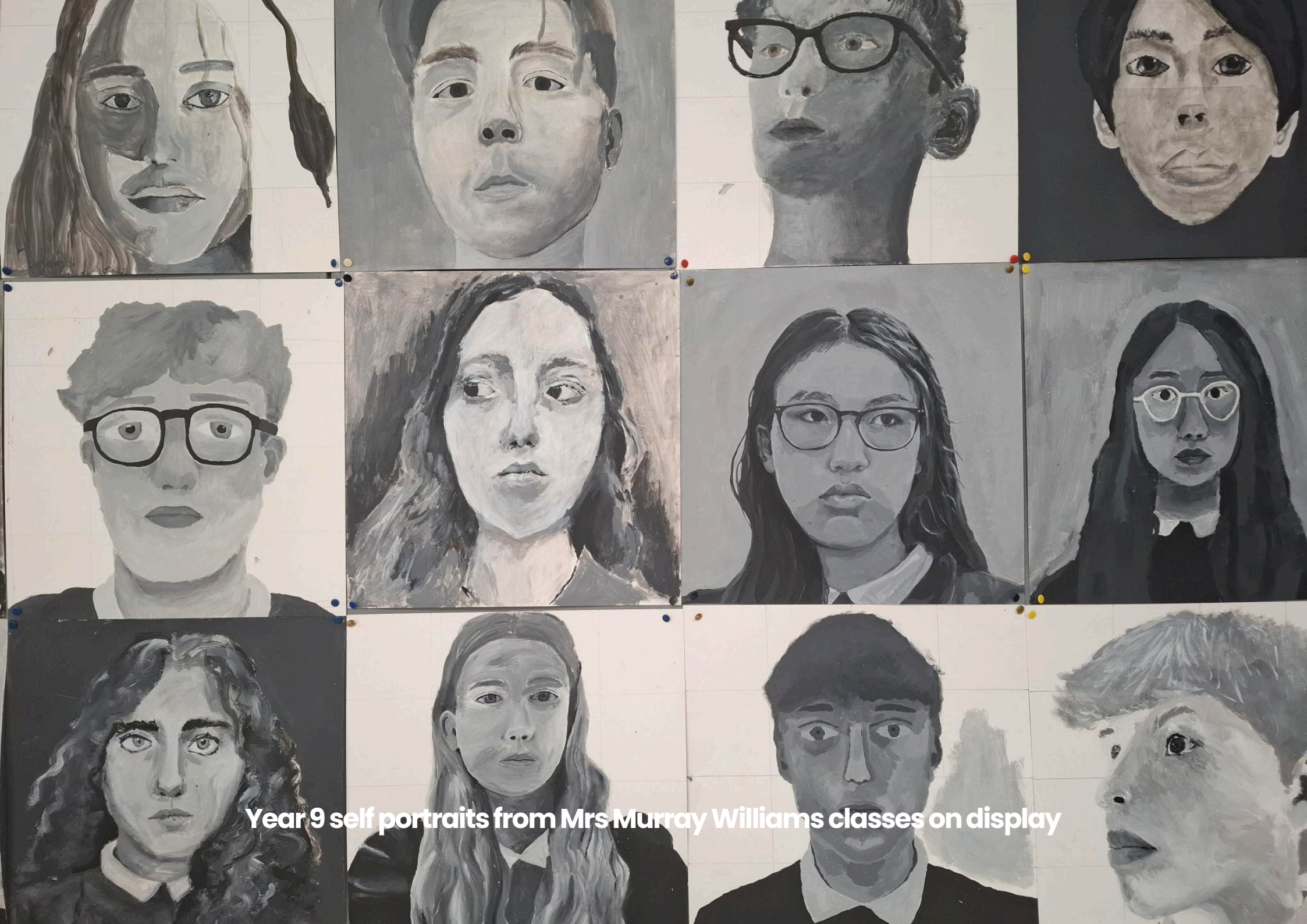
It was the week before the Easter Break that Mary Poppins flew into the Atrium Theatre at Chesterton and worked her magic for three evening performances, culminating in a hugely-deserved unanimous standing ovation from a packed house. It will be a production which will stay in people's hearts for a long time to come! Even on Year 8 parents evening a few nights ago, several Chesterton families were kind enough to congratulate the drama department on the success of the show, describing it as 'jaw-dropping' with one parents remarking 'I just sat there in disbelief at how utterly amazing everyone and everything was!'. With all the difficulties, despair and danger in the world at this time, it really was heart-warming to see this story told with such sincerity of feeling, precision of movement, musical resonance and theatrical accomplishment.

Mr Cooper told his cast that he rarely cried, but that seeing them all give their best on CYT's stage did bring a tear of joy to his eye in the end! Meanwhile, many of the company from Years 7 – 10 were crying at the end of the performance run, because they had loved the experience of being part of this musical so much, and felt such bittersweet emotion that it was all over. There is nothing quite like a familiar tale told with new energy to remind us all that human beings – especially the young ones! – are capable of such wondrous things: 'anything CAN happen if you let it'. Thank you to everyone who supported the Show in some way, and huge congratulations to the Company for – literally and figuratively – bringing the stars out to shine on our stage.





Year 9 self portraits from Mrs Murray Williams classes on display



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