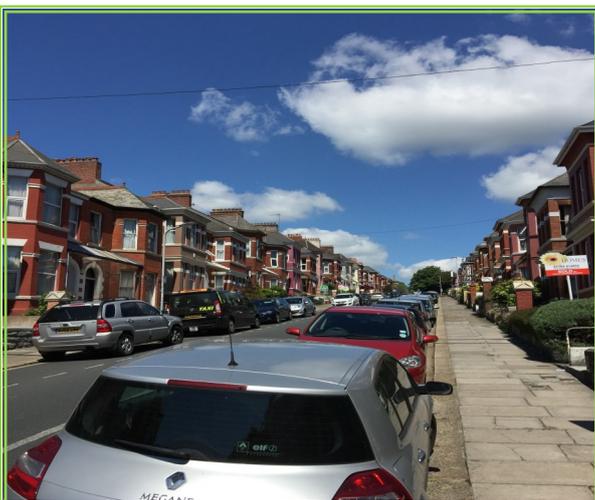




# LGS Headlines

27 May 2016





# LGS Headlines

## 27 May 2016

### From the Headteacher

Dear Parents

The school suddenly seems quieter for much of the day, with three of our year groups on examination leave. Year 11s, 12s and 13s are coming and going for their examinations and to see staff for last-minute support and encouragement.



For Years 7-10 it is business as usual, and a chance for the Year 10s in particular to take responsibility as role models to the younger students. For a brief period of four weeks until Year 12s return they are the senior students in the school, and we have high expectations of them.

Students from other year groups have been excellent ambassadors for the school in recent weeks. Around 20 of our Year 9s acted as young leaders for the Slough School Sports Network primary school Quad Kids Athletics tournament, held at LGS earlier this week. The organisers were full of praise for their maturity and responsibility.

We are holding a series of Open Mornings for prospective parents and have used students from Years 7, 8 and 9 as guides. Visiting families have been impressed with the enthusiasm and confidence of the students as they were guided round the school on a tour of about 45 minutes, answering a range of questions about aspects of school life.

Unfortunately, we have also had to deal with a number of incidents in recent weeks involving students' poor decisions when using social media outside school. Parents wanting guidance on the complexities of 'online life' for teenagers may be interested in the article in this newsletter pointing them towards useful sources of information.

As we reach the half term holiday, I do hope you have a pleasant bank holiday break.

**Mr J Constable - Headteacher**

### In the student pages of this issue.....

- Year 10 DofE
- Year 10 Slapton Trip
- Amnesty Youth Awards
- Iggy & Litro Magazine entry

**Mr M Aplin - News Manager**

### Dates for your diary - June

- Mon 6 June** Return to school
- Wed 8 June** Focus Day
- Thu 9 June** D of E Silver practice expedition
- Fri 10 June** Open Morning for prospective parents
- Mon 13 June** Year 12 return from Study leave  
Year 7 Report reviews this week
- Tue 14 June** Year 8 Boppard visit until Sat 18 Jun
- Thu 16 June** Open morning for prospective parents  
Year 12 UCAS Information Evening  
6.30pm
- Tue 21 June** Year 12 Passport for Life Day  
Year 8 Art visit/Real Game
- Thu 23 June** Year 7 History/Geography visit
- Fri 24 June** Year 12 Biology visit to Slapton Ley
- Mon 27 June** Year 9 Student led reviews this week  
Year 10 Exams this week
- Tue 28 June** Year 11 Transition Day
- Thu 30 June** Sports Day

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### LGS student scoops top prize at Amnesty Youth Awards

A Year 9 student walked away with the top prize in Amnesty Youth Awards at a prestigious ceremony held in London. Pooja Anand entered the human rights competition in the Poetry strand and beat off hundreds of entrants from across the UK. Speaking after receiving the award, Pooja said:

*“My poem was about LGBT rights. It was set as an assessment. I was inspired to write about this issue because I know so many people who have these problems and I wanted to convey how they feel to have to deal with these issues. I was shaking and kept asking my mum, ‘Are you sure that’s me?’. I never thought I’d get shortlisted for the top 10, winning was fantastic.”*

Sonali Shah, former presenter of Newsround, was the host of the ceremony and added: *“I was overwhelmed by the standard of the finalist work and congratulate all those who have taken part.”*

Pooja’s entry was judged by a prestigious panel, including Joseph Coelho (playwright and performer), Ben Holden (writer and film producer), Jackie Kay (award-winning writer of fiction, poetry and plays), Jessica Natrass (Youth Judge and previous finalist). The Amnesty Youth Awards challenge young people aged 7-19 to explore human rights issues through reporting, photography, poetry, performing, campaigning and fundraising.



### Year 7s acquire bodyguard skills and are inspired to read author’s books

The Lecture Theatre of Langley Grammar School resounded with gunshots on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April. Fortunately nobody sustained any injuries although there WERE shrieks as author Chris Bradford aimed a water pistol at his audience.

Thriller writer, Chris Bradford, entertained students with extracts from his books and also introduced them to the techniques used by bodyguards to protect their charges.



An excited audience learned how to be on guard, to blend into the background and how to be assertive both verbally and physically where required.

Dressed in a baseball hat, shades and a black “T” shirt, Chris looked the part and certainly could demonstrate martial arts techniques.

The show enthused students to read and all Chris’ library books are currently on loan.

**Ms C Shine - School Librarian**



### Concerned about your son or daughter's online safety?

At Langley Grammar School we encourage responsible use of the internet, which we regard as a very useful tool for learning - as indicated by our encouragement of one-to-one tablet use with students having their own iPads. We have given students a proper grounding in safe and appropriate internet use. We frequently reinforce messages about online safety and the difficulties which students can face through inappropriate or thoughtless use, particularly of social media.

The majority of our students use social media and other online tools responsibly, with a clear understanding of what is appropriate and how to stay safe. However, we are dealing with an increasing number of incidents relating to the misuse of such tools outside school, particularly regarding social media. There are a small number of students who are not following the guidance we have given and are putting themselves at risk.

We have recently held a series of assemblies in which we talked to students across all year groups about the position the school and the police take on such issues as taking and distributing indecent images ('sexting'), making inappropriate comments on social media sites and targeted abusive online behaviour. We have made it clear to students that it is illegal to take, possess or share indecent images of any young person under the age of 18, and to do so could risk imprisonment and inclusion on the sex offenders' register. Parents should be assured that we will respond swiftly and effectively to any issues of which we are made aware.

We would encourage all parents to regularly monitor their son or daughter's online use, including the use of iPads and mobile phones. We have strong internet filtering systems in school but we would also encourage parents to review their access arrangements for mobile devices through wireless networks and to ensure they have appropriate controls in place. There are some links to useful websites below, where parents can obtain up to date advice and guidance.

*Mr S Cook - Assistant Headteacher, Safeguarding lead.*

<http://parentinfo.org/>



[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/Parents](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/Parents)



**Net Aware** )))

[www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/)

**Be Share Aware**  
**NSPCC**





## 60 Years of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award



On 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Mr Pascall and Mr Constable attended a unique Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) Presentation at Buckingham Palace, London. At the event Langley Grammar School was presented with a special plaque from the DofE Charity by celebrity supporter Ainsley Harriott, acknowledging the school's commitment to running the DofE Award and thanking it for giving young people the opportunity to transform their lives.



The DofE is celebrating its Diamond Anniversary throughout 2016, having supported millions of young people in the UK and across the globe to achieve DofE Awards since it was founded in 1956. The prestigious Gold Award Presentation at Buckingham Palace is one of many memorable events taking place to celebrate 60 years of the Charity.

Members of the Royal Family; HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH The Earl of Wessex and HRH The Countess of Wessex, congratulated those that were present including young Gold Award achievers, organisations that deliver the DofE Award and special guests such as corporate supporters and DofE Diamond Challengers, who have set themselves a personal challenge to raise money for the DofE Charity in its anniversary year.

Currently, there are over 300,000 young people following a DofE programme across the UK through a variety of centres including both state and independent schools, special schools, businesses, prisons, young offender institutions, housing associations and youth groups.

Langley Grammar School has been delivering the DofE for many years with students achieving a DofE Award after volunteering in their community, learning a skill, getting fit and going on an expedition. Following a DofE programme can significantly impact young people's futures, enabling them to develop vital skills for life and work, such as confidence, commitment, resilience and team work. We have a team of staff who deliver the Award at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels and without whose dedication, our students could not benefit from the experience. Our special thanks go to **Mr Podbury**, who leads the Bronze and Gold sections; **Mr Pascall** who leads the Silver section and is the Award Manager; **Ms Roughton**, **Mr Kitley**, **Miss Sood** and all those other staff who have accompanied expeditions or supported students in other sections of the Award.

Peter Westgarth, Chief Executive of the DofE Charity said: *"Through the DofE, Langley Grammar School is inspiring the success of its young people; equipping them with the attributes and skills to get a job and build strong relationships whilst opening up their worlds and introducing them to a broad range of interests. We are truly grateful to all of our Licensed Organisations for the work that they do, they are an integral part of the DofE family, and our Diamond Anniversary is a fantastic opportunity to say thank you."*



### Day-a-week School for most able pupils in primary schools

*'Reach together, beyond the stars and experience the wonders on your journey'*

#### Background

The Day-a-week School concept was originally piloted by an Education Action Zone and was found to be so successful that Slough Local Authority opened the provision in January 2010 to provide an enhanced and enriched curriculum of challenge for able primary pupils from across the Borough.

In September 2015, Day-a-week School came under the control of Langley Grammar School, providing outreach to local primary schools. Pupils attending gain academically, but of most benefit are the social and emotional aspects of working with other able pupils from different schools, and experiencing the secondary school environment.



There are some current LGS pupils who attended DWS while they were at primary school, the oldest being now in Year 12. They never miss an opportunity to call in and work with the primary pupils in this year's cohort.

#### The curriculum

The main subjects covered are maths, science and philosophy but pupils have the chance to lead and direct learning, where appropriate, through their own interests and research. They are taught presentation skills and thinking skills such as Six Thinking Hats and Mind Mapping. They learn about how to improve their own learning and how important learning skills such as resilience and creativity are to successful life-long learners.

This year our topic has been 'Voyages of Discovery'. Pupils chose their own topic to teach the rest of us and our curriculum has been based around their studies. We have 'discovered' about how we learn, the origins of man and space exploration. We still have some aspects of historical discovery of our own planet including plate tectonics and important historical figures to investigate.

Our learning is supported by LGS Sixth Form students who add much to our learning experience. They support and act as role models to the primary school pupils, again enhancing their learning and social interactions.

DWS pupils write:

*'Helpful Sixth Formers help us when we need the support to do or understand the work. The Sixth Formers can be quite friendly.'*

*'I love DWS because it gives me the chance to make more friends and learn more facts. Also I love that I am able to express myself and meet role models. I love that year 12 and 13 students help me in my work. It is great that I can use scrap paper to write notes and to draw mindmaps. I love the fact that I can present my work how I want and also stick in my work if I have done my work on another sheet of paper or I have drawn a poster.'*

We aim to broaden pupils' horizons and encourage them to aim high. Where possible, trips are used to inspire learning so we are visiting the floating classroom on the Grand Union Canal next week. Sixth formers talking about their university choices set the younger pupils thinking of their future choices.

If you know of other primary schools that might be interested in sending pupils to Day-a-Week School, please ask them to contact the DWS Lead Teacher Gill Howarth on [dws@lgs.sch.alough.uk](mailto:dws@lgs.sch.alough.uk)



# Year 10 Bronze D of E

*Written By Vianca Shah (10K)*

Forty students in year 10 started their D of E experience in September last year. The D of E bronze award is comprised of four sections – physical, skills and volunteering – along with an expedition. The year 10s set off this April on their practise expedition – the first 20 from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April and the other 20 on the 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April. While we knew it was going to be difficult, it was still both a physical and mental challenge going out on the expedition.

The experience for every student was quite different. The walk itself was not necessarily what was hardest for many, but it was the carrying almost 15kg of food, camping equipment and other items for the 2 days. Before the expedition, we had had many lessons and training sessions from Mr Podbury on how to deal with situations whilst on D of E. Even the smallest of things, such as using a carton instead of a glass jar made a massive difference when it came to the expedition, as minimising the weight of their rucksack is something many students found a challenge and still need to focus on. From pitching a tent, to a practise cooking, we had done it all. But those experiences



We set off on Sunday morning from a village in the Chilterns. For the first part of Sunday, most groups had a teacher with them, which helped in developing our navigation and skills as a team. At first it was quite difficult, but we soon got the hang of setting the compass to a certain direction and turning the map that way. Reading a map was something that we had all done during our route planning sessions but only realised the importance of during the practise expedition. Even the contour lines proved to be very useful, especially on the second day. Along with this we learnt a lot about the countryside, witnessing some of the wonders of nature as we walked.

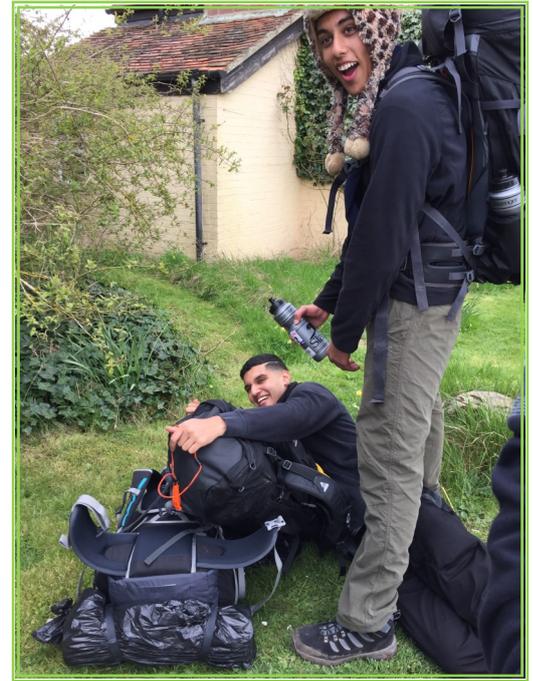
Most of the groups set off on their own by Sunday afternoon, but all of the groups were navigating themselves by 4pm on Sunday. Every hour we had to send the teachers our 6-figure grid references, which meant more coordinating using the maps. Soon we became quite familiar with some of the signs of the countryside, especially the ones that indicated a footpath, as we were following footpaths to lead to a nature trail. Later on in the day it started to rain, and as it got late some groups went by coach but others made it to the campsite. Then came coordinating setting up the tent, along with getting the trangea ready before it got dark. Working together was key, and it helped us learn a lot about the people in our group.



# Year 10 Bronze D of E

Written By Vianca Shah (10K)

For many the second day was easier than the first, as the distance was less but with muscle aches and tiredness kicking in, it felt like a lot longer for others. The path was more straightforward on the second day, and no groups had gotten lost. There was however a steep hill along the way, which while not long in distance, took a lot more time compared to the other parts. Reaching the field at the end, realising that we had finally finished was not only relieving but gave us a sense of achievement.



Overall the practise expedition had its challenges, but the experience was immensely beneficial and has prepared us well. We have learnt a lot from this experience, and hope to improve from it. The skills that we have developed and obstacles we have faced have made us realise the importance of both our physical and mental endurance. But most of all we would like to thank all who helped us over the weekends. Not only did they make sure we were on track throughout the walk, but helped us all along the way and it probably wasn't any easier for them either, especially when they had to listen to all 20 of us complaining along the way. What we have learnt over these two days is invaluable, and we hope to take on all of it so that the real expedition is more efficient.



# Year 10 Slapton GCSE

## Geography Slapton Visit

*Wasif Haque, Amar Patel, Sneha Chaubey (10K), Pranav Vyas (10S) & Sumayyah Ishfaq (10H)*

From the early morning of Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May right through the weekend to Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 85 Year 10 GCSE Geography students had the opportunity of going to Slapton Sands in Devon to carry out a significant part of their controlled assessments. This trip had made us students very enthusiastic and excited for a while now, since many of us had never been able to carry out controlled assessments this far away from school before. After an extensive 4 hour journey, in which many of us decided to take a nap, we reached the Slapton Ley Field centre, where for the 3 day trip we would be residing. With vast grounds, spacious classrooms and eco-friendly rooms, we were greeted with some of the best accommodation that was available and a truly beautiful overview of the sea and local village. Shortly after our arrival though, we had little time to explore the centre as we wasted no time in attending our first lesson. Prior to the trip, we chose one of the three geography groups which our coursework would be based around: physical, human or mixed - we both, along with 12 others, were in the human geography group and for the rest of the trip, we spent most of our work time with Hannah, a member of staff at the centre.

Our first lesson was a summary of the entire coursework that we would do at Slapton and where we would go for the next two days to carry out our research. Hannah explained to us that we would be going to Plymouth, a major city in Devon, and we would be doing some secondary research before the visit. After a good hour or so of online research and briefing of the course, thanks to the brilliant weather we headed down to the Slapton beach to let off a little, or in some cases a lot of, steam and while some people spent half the time getting the pebbles out of their shoes, a few of us did not hesitate to show off our skills of skimming stones along the coastline- it was evident that some had more practise than others! After our 10 minute walk back up to the centre, we were all relieved to finally enjoy a well-earned dinner, as well as arriving first so that we could narrowly miss the inevitably long queues for the food. With full stomachs and everyone content, we spent an additional half hour organising everything for the next day and then the rest of the day was ours! The centre had three common rooms for us to visit, where we could play table tennis, play pool, watch TV or just relax and talk to each other about the different things that we all did. It was great for us to have some free time and socialise with people we may have not seen earlier in the day, whether it'd be just talking or over an intense game of table tennis. The pool table was surprisingly popular, given that not many people had played pool before and it was interesting and humorous for us to see everyone trying to teach ourselves how to play.



Many of us were not glad to get up at 7:30 in the morning for breakfast- it was way too early for a Sunday morning! And oh boy you could tell everyone's tired faces when they came down for breakfast, but there's nothing a cup of coffee can't solve. In addition to this, we were all challenged to one of the hardest tasks in Langley Grammar history: making our own sandwiches for lunch. This was unfamiliar to so many students, but we took this job head on and after five minutes, we all had lunches to go- there's nothing a Langley Grammar student can't overcome!



# Year 10 Slapton GCSE

## Geography Slapton Visit

*Written By Wasif Haque, Amar Patel, Sneha Chaubey (10K), Pranav Vyas (10S) & Sumayyah Ishfaq (10H)*

Immediately after breakfast, the human geographers took a one hour trip down to Plymouth, where we would go to three areas to look at the examples of deprivation. The three places were Mutley, Hartley and Stonehouse and it was fascinating to explore the streets of these wards, not only because of how rural they were but also the large differences the three areas possessed and we eagerly noted down all these things. In between our research, we stopped at The Barbican, a harbour in Plymouth, to eat our lunches while also looking around the area, which was clearly a tourist attraction.

The physical group mentor named Graham, introduced us to the various processes that were relevant to the costal areas of Slapton. His explanation was based primarily upon what we had already been taught for our GCSE specification. Our mentor did however explain some very complex and unique processes of Slapton to our group. After this short briefing on erosion, longshore drift and marine transgression we went down to Slapton Sands to see these processes in actions. After a short 15-minute walk, we were down at the beach itself, a beach of shingle. To be able to see the geology and the contrasting wave types at this proximity was truly spectacular and linked up all the various aspects of our learning. After we had inspected these various costal processes and the lithology of the area, we returned to the classroom to make our mini-hypothesis, of which would aid us in answering our overall hypothesis as well as individual aspects we may not understand.





# Year 10 Slapton GCSE

## Geography Slapton Visit

*Written By Wasif Haque, Amar Patel, Sneha Chaubey (10K), Pranav Vyas (10S) & Sumayyah Ishfaq (10H)*

The second day reinforced our understanding and allowed us to not only think about the processes that occur, but how we could prove these processes. Our first location of the day was Great Mattiscombe Sands (GMS). This beach has undergone processes of longshore drift, erosion and is largely effected by the prevalent winds from the SW. By using methods such as measuring wind speed using an anemometer and wind direction with a compass, we were able to prove our hypothesis using primary data. We also used a beach profile to prove the gradual change of sediment deposits over the length of the beach. For these various methods we used different sampling techniques, such as stratified, random and systematic. These allowed us to not only prove the gradual changes and variations but allowed our results to be accurate due to the removal of human bias. At GMS we also conducted a lithology study, and this involved inspecting the sediment type over random areas on the beach.

Meanwhile in Plymouth heat began to drill down on us but nonetheless, the Barbican was bustling with life, crowded to the brim with families and tourists, as during that weekend, a pirate festival had taken over the Barbican and you could not do a full 360 degrees turn without bumping into someone dressed as a pirate. All the shops and tourist attractions were pirate themed and it just reminded us of how enjoyable and amusing this trip was, even with all that coursework. The Barbican was also of historic importance, especially in the World War, with a towering memorial to acknowledge all the passed soldiers. The visit to Plymouth took up most of the day and it was safe to say that all 14 of us were now closer as friends after having to put up with each other for the entire day. To round it all off, we treasured the last few hours of us being able to socialise with each other in the centre, as the next day would be our last day at Slapton.

Later in the day we repeated these same processes but on Slapton Sands. As Slapton Sands was much larger we found that the effect of longshore drift was also much greater. We also realised that the prevailing wind direction was the same, however, due to the headland between GMS and Slapton Sands, the destructive waves were being refracted, hence meaning the waves coming into the coast of Slapton Sands had little energy and were rather constructive. To see these contrasting processes allowed us to answer our edexcel question. Another key difference between the locations was the lithology of Slapton Sands compared with GMS. Slapton Sands has a wider range of sediment due to a process called marine transgression- which in simple form is essentially sediment from a long way away being transported to the coast due to a change in sea levels. The idea that what happened at the last ice age over 10,000 years ago could impact what we see today is truly fascinating.

After completing our primary research, we were ready to go back to the classroom and inspect our data. Using programs such as ArcGIS and Excel, we were able to present our data in a way in which would allow us to easily compare it. To end the day, we had to each come up with our own hypothesis. This would give everyone's controlled assessment its own individual element. This allowed us to think as if we were physical geographers and these 'what if' questions allowed us to gain higher level thinking skills.

For the in between element of the trip, we had to investigate coastal management in Start Bay. We were grateful to collect data for our GCSE geography outside the classroom, making it even more adventurous and interesting. For our option specifically, we were exploring the implications of sea defenses on the environment, local area and residents- this gave us a very deep insight into the impacts of natural coastal processes and allowed us to compare these to management methods that had been chosen, and beyond this, we were also able to understand how people living in the area felt about these choices and the impacts these had on them.

The team at the Slapton Ley Field Centre were very knowledgeable and encompassed a lot of detailed information and data collection methods that really helped us with our controlled assessment. Andrew, our tutor at the centre, made the activities within our chosen component very fun and tried to combine various activities into our investigations; some inside the classroom and some just metres away from the edge of the cliff.



# Year 10 Slapton GCSE

## Geography Slapton Visit

*Written By Wasif Haque, Amar Patel, Sneha Chaubey (10K), Pranav Vyas (10S) & Sumayyah Ishfaq (10H)*

For the Human group we were going to visit Plymouth for the very last time before returning home. For a good hour, we spent time in Mutley to collect the final bits of our data, as this was not going to be possible once we returned home. It turned out that we were a good few minutes early, so we didn't rush in getting back to the coaches to take us home, giving us enough time for a quick toilet break before the lengthy journey home. We all said our farewells to the staff and thanked them for the trip and finally set off from rural Devon back to the familiarity of urban Langley. With many of us once again deciding to take a hard-earned snooze, we were satisfied that the trip had been a success and surprisingly for all of us, it was not as tricky and as nerve-racking as we had previously thought it would be. This was definitely going to be a highlight of our time in Year 10.

For all the groups the extra duty to pack our bags was required, as well as making sure that our rooms were cleared to the same impeccable standard which we received them in. Teachers engineered their way through the rooms inspecting and directing the students to their allocated coaches and classes. The physical group was going to spend their last day working on their individual hypothesis this meant we were going to be reunited with the enthralling sceneries of Slapton Sands. The physical group congregated, embarked and set off on the coach to Slapton Sands. Every individual was doing to investigate upon their own unique hypothesis this meant they would execute their work at different point of the beach; torcross, Strete Gate and middle car park. The coach skilfully dropped off students at their allocated stations. We had plenty of time to implement and accomplish our tasks, we could explore upon the sediment size, shape and many different aspects as our individual hypothesis. Once finished we could spend the last hour enjoying the local ice cream store, beach and village.



We would like to thank Mr Aplin, Mr Mace, Mr Harding, Ms Kenner, Ms Roughton, Ms Francis, Mr Nash and the team at the Slapton Ley Field centre for accompanying this trip with such a large amount of us students and for all the help they gave us in preparing for our geography controlled assessments- it was not as stressful after all! Now to write up all the information we recorded.



# Amnesty Youth Awards

Written By Pooja Anand (9S)

Below is Pooja's entry:

Human rights poem- By Pooja Anand, Langley Grammar School

I Wish I Could Come Out- A human rights poem about LGBT rights by Pooja Anand

Day 1- Sweaty palms, I turn red,  
I have to say what I've been hiding for years,  
I have to face my fears,  
But I turn away instead...  
I WISH I COULD COME OUT

Day 2- Today is a new day to try once more,  
Standing in the doorway I fidget yet again,  
Confused glances thrown my way as we say 'Amen',  
The familiar feeling of my mouth freezing in place as I bolt out the door.  
I WISH I COULD COME OUT

Day 3- I have to do it today, I must get this off my chest,  
My little secret becoming impossible to control,  
Taking things I love like an unstoppable black hole.  
My feelings for the same gender must be expressed...  
I WISH I COULD COME OUT

Day 4- I raced out yesterday as expected,  
If they know about my secret I'll be deserted,  
Abandoned, fending for my own if blurted,  
Who knows if I'll ever be accepted...





# IGGY & Litro Magazine entry

*Written by Rajdeep Nagra (10H)*

Inspiring, encouraging and acknowledging the creativity of young people is a common goal for the online educational community IGGY and Litro Magazine, who have joined together for the sixth year of the IGGY and Litro Young Writers' Prize. This competition is open to creative 13-18 year olds all over the world. The theme this year is Movement. Rajdeep came 6<sup>th</sup> in the world!! Here is her story below:

A very pretty girl with a voice like home once told me storms were beautiful. That when the sky growls and lightning illuminates your tenebrific bedroom, when the wind whips at the branches of the trees that dance like spirits and die like humans it is nature's way of screaming out, 'I'm here! I exist! I don't want to be forgotten!' I can empathise with that. It's marvellously human of me to do so; I yearn for permanence, to etch marks on the fabric of the universe that will outlast my meagre existence, outlast my species, outlast my planet, even. The infallibility that one day I'll waste away like the leaves after autumn is agonising at times.



The rain slaps at the stone structure that is simultaneously my prison and my salvation from the wild elements that threaten to bite at me, and I think about flying. Eyelids fluttering shut, I envisage the expansion of my shoulder blades, protruding through my tired skin to taste the recycled air of my bedroom. My wings take shape. Feathers of elegance and warmth coat my back, a deep brown colour, like my mother's eyes in dying sunlights; then two deep breaths. One. Two. And I'm gone. Soaring out the window into outside, no weight in my bones to restrict me; I burn my sorrows like gasoline and they fuel my flight.

I inhale, and the frigid air creeps down my throat playing house in my lungs; it's enough to convince me I'm alive. Exhale and the breath decorates the night-time with pretty patterns, which are beautiful despite their impermanence, beauty. Perhaps beauty can be found anywhere if you look hard enough, everywhere if you train yourself to notice it. I am broken out of this thought by feathers tickling my neck like the fingers of ghosts lost in the storm. The air beneath my wings is nice, the raindrops on my eyelashes welcome... But I can't really fly.

Dancing! Breaking the chains wrapped around my arms and my legs and my chest and my throat, expressing with my limbs what my words fail to convey. I've always thought that perhaps I could have been a ballerina in another life; if I cannot fly away from numbing aches, maybe I could shake myself free from their grip through acts of beautiful bodily contortion.



# IGGY & Litro Magazine entry

Written by Rajdeep Nagra (10H)

I remember when I was younger, sitting on the floor crossed legged and wide eyed. I'd watch those dancers on those TV talent shows paint the air with emotion, envious of their communication skills, for I marvelled at the way they transformed for the space of a song - I've meant to take up a class, but I haven't got around to it, never the less the appeal is undeniable. You don't have to be you when you are dancing. When dancing, one could be wild and strong, like the wind of that storm that's both outside my window and behind my eyelids, sharp and commanding and consuming. Alternatively, a dancer could be something gently ethereal, a singing summer breeze translated into movement against mellifluous noise. An excellently raw being, something more than human, even if just for a while. Art. Beautiful art. Not my art.

If I cannot fly and I cannot dance well enough to fill my craters the next best thing would be to run away, escape on foot. Wade across a river so the hounds won't follow. The sound of my feet slapping against cracked pavement is liberating in my ears, and as the world around me melts into mere colours I feel as if I am invincible. The earth is a blur; I am a blur. I wonder, if I move fast enough could I disappear, slip through either the cracks beneath my feet or the ones littering this universe? I don't believe I'd mind which. Glancing down I glimpse green sprouting amidst the grey and a thought surfaces: How strange that weeds grow in concrete cracks. Life forcing its way up to the air, defying all odds simply by existing, but then again aren't we the same? The odds of an individual human being coming into existence are minuscule, near zero, yet here we are, over seven billion of us, real, breathing miracles. Seven billion miracles. We don't seem to see it that way though.

I smell sweat. I feel it too, drip, drip dripping down the slice of skin beside my eye, and then converging inwards with the crease of my face in such a way that I could probably catch it with my tongue if I tried. My chest hurts from running, a burning sensation edging its way outwards, and as my ribs do not collapse and my chest cavities hold out I am proud of my body. Ragged breath creeps out between my lips, soft aches swirl about my calves. I am racing with forces too large for this vessel. Where am I going? I slice across the world, and the world shatters.

Back to my bedroom. On the floor, fading carpet gripped between my fingers, gasping. Reality thrusts forward and for a simple moment I drown in an ineffable ache for more than this. But then it passes; I get up.

And I am fine.

And the storm will dance in my ears and run through my brain and fly to every nerve in my young body, but I am not the storm, and I am no angel, and I am not a dancer. I am still here. And when the sun rises in all its mesmeric beauty, I will still be here.

Still. What wonderful thoughts to fill my headspace with.

