

# BECCLES chronicle

Beccles Free School is a proud member of the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust

The newsletter for Beccles Free School | *"Providing a foundation for life"*

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BECCLES  
FREE SCHOOL



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FREE SCHOOL

www.becclesfreeschool.org.uk  
Castle Hill, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 7BQ

## Term Dates

**17 March 2015**

**Year 9 vaccinations**

**27 March 2015**

**Enrichment Day**

**13 and 14 April 2015**

**Professional Development Days  
for Staff**

**15 April 2015**

**Students back to school**

**22 April 2015**

**Progress Evening Year 9**

**24 April 2015**

**Trip to Banham Zoo**

**30 April 2015**

**Junior Maths Challenge**

### Twitter –

Please remember that you can follow Beccles Free School on twitter: @BecclesFS. Please also check our website for information and events - www.becclesfreeschool.org.uk

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## Head of School's Welcome



*Sandra Govender,  
Head of School*

Having been part of the Beccles pioneering family since the inception of the Free School, I have taken great pride in seeing the school flourish since its opening and am immensely proud to be taking the lead at this key time in the life of the school. I want to thank all parents, students, staff and community partners for their messages of support and best wishes since my acceptance of the role.

As a firm believer in the value of our 6 C's to success; Challenge, Co-operation, Confidence, Commitment, Community, Celebration, I am committed to building further upon the successes of the last 2 years and seek to establish our school at the heart of the community; now that we are settled at our permanent home on Castle Hill. We have started to forge partnerships with local partner Primary and High schools and community organisations such as Beccles Society of Artists and look forward to inviting new partners to join us in enriching the experiences of our students.

Our school community continues to grow with new students joining us at regular intervals in addition to our Year 7 students that started with us in September. At present we have 286 students on roll; having admitted 15 new students since January this year. All new students are supported and guided through a transition period, ensuring that they embody, take ownership of and role model the Trust ethos and vision.

We are always developing the leadership capacity within our student body with the expectation that every student should hold at

least one significant leadership role while with us. Some of the leadership roles include Prefects, sports leaders, House captains, peer mentors, library leaders, learning mentors, junior chefs and transition leaders. Opportunities are created throughout the year for volunteering and recruitment and I look forward to seeing more students join the leadership teams.

With this being the last full term for our Year 11s, students are experiencing a period of intense pressure to complete coursework and controlled assessments to the highest standards possible and to meet unexpected challenges and demands to ensure that they achieve the best results possible. To support their learning we are encouraging all Year 11 students to take advantage of Lesson 7 each day (drinks and snacks on offer). Our staff are at hand during this lesson, to provide the necessary guidance and support they need in completing GCSE tasks.

Before I pen off, I want to take this opportunity to thank all parents and carers, including the Friends of Beccles Free School for their continued support and to those who give up their time to volunteer at the school. Their participation, dedication and commitment is greatly appreciated by staff and students.

Finally, I feel extremely privileged to take the helm at Beccles for the Lent term and to lead the school through a journey of any challenges we may face.

**Mrs Sandra Govender,  
Head of School**

# Bringing the 6C's to life!

Using the sponsorship money donated by the Beccles Society of Artists, a group of students worked on a mosaic project to encapsulate what the 6C's (confidence, cooperation, commitment, community, challenge and celebration) meant to them.



After a cycle of research, design, and creating a prototype they produced a range of small and large mosaic pieces that now adorn the main corridor of the school.

The project developed existing and new art skills in our students and fostered a stronger bond between students of the different year groups. It was a pleasure to see how team work resulted in the 6C's being brought to life!



## Student Focus

Alex Johnson | Year 11



Reflecting on the past year as Head Boy at Beccles Free School, I am reminded of some of the opportunities I have been given.

As an ambassador for Beccles Free School, I have met local MP's, community leaders, hundreds of guests and prospective students and their families.

My role allowed me many great and valuable experiences that built my confidence especially with public speaking and leadership opportunities such as helping organise events for the school such as Parents and Child events and speaking at events such as Open Evening and Transition activities.

Although it is with sadness that I hand over the Head Boy badge to Kris Lyles, I am looking forward to focusing my efforts into my GCSE studies so that I can attain the best grades possible.

## New Staff



George Wall



Rachel Langstaff

A warm Beccles Free School welcome to George Wall and Rachel Langstaff who join our staff this term. George joins us from Saxmundham Free School as the new School Administration Manager and Rachel joins us as a Teaching Assistant.

# Careers Fair

It is clear that the Careers Fair held in December has had its intended impact. Year 11 students are working hard in school and almost all students have already secured places at colleges for the next academic year. Those that haven't are going through the interview process at the moment. All credit goes to our students who respectfully challenged the FE and Sixth Form Providers at the Fair, with some of them asking the representatives why they should select that particular provider!

Our students in Year 10 will soon be attending Skills East at the Norfolk Showground where they will be given the opportunity to meet potential further educational providers.

On another note, it has been a pleasure to watch the students develop, and in particular I must give a nod to Year 11 who are now in the final stages of their time with us. Many have matured into responsible young adults and are in a great place to achieve their potential, not just for now but beyond their time with us. I would encourage students to make good use of lesson 7 and all of the other interventions staff have put in place. These last weeks and months are as you know crucial, and I am personally adopting an all or nothing attitude. As parents, you know where we are and if you have any concerns do not hesitate to get in touch. There is much to look forward to, including the Leaver's Ball and end of school celebrations. But, we are not done with our core business yet. In the words of the great Mr. Pentney; "Push on!"



## CoSpace Robotics competition



CoSpace competition field with a game in progress.

### What is it?

It is a computer coding competition.

### Who made it?

The CoSpace Robotic System (CsBot), developed by ARICC, Singapore Polytechnic to integrate 3D digital simulation and game-based learning together with robotics for education.

### What do the students have to do?

In pairs students program robots to pick up objects, avoid traps and drop off loads in a designated area.

### What will they learn?

- Computer coding using C#.
- Computational thinking.
- Programming robots.
- Analysing the effectiveness of different search strategies.
- Develop mathematical and problem solving skills.

### How can this help my child in the future?

Coding/programming can be applied to virtually any industry. The ability to write/program software has endless possibilities for example developing apps, databases, engineering and robotics.

## Our progress so far:

### Our rising stars!

Thomas Filshie, Rory Jackson, Felix Barriball, James Moir;  
India Berry, Haydn Brown, Gabriel Young, Harry Ingle,  
Suzi Robinson, Elliot Torrance, Thomas Carter, Sam Florido,  
Lindell Brown, James Gorrige.

### October 2014

Students from 12 schools around East Anglia were given 2 hours to program their robots. School battles commenced from there to find out who had programmed the most capable robots. With a mixture of skill and craft, Beccles Free School came out Winners of East Anglia. The result being that we were invited back to participate in a 'Masters class'.

### January 2015

With Christmas not long behind us, we ventured back to BT's Adastral Park for the 'Masters Class'. The coding and analysis tasks were far more in depth, team working and problem solving were skills pushed to the limits. Suzie Robinson and Elliot Torrance stood tallest taking the award for the secondary school with the highest score.

### What's next?

The UK championship is in March 2015, Beccles free school will be participating with the top teams from the previous round.

Following this, there is the 'European robotics competition' in Leipzig Germany and the 'World Robocup final' in Japan where we endeavour to be!



## News from the Friends of Beccles Free School

Following on from our successful Christmas Fair, we hosted a Bingo evening on Friday 27 February 2015, which as always was a fun and exciting event for family, friends and neighbours. Thank you to everyone that attended, we raised an incredible £265.50!

We are planning to hold a Table Top Sale on Saturday 9 May 2015 to be held at school. A limited number of tables will be available at £5 each. Use this opportunity to promote your business, showcase your crafts or just have a spring clean and up cycle your unwanted items!

For further information about these events or to find out more about the Friends of Beccles Free School, contact Ruth on [hubbards4@btinternet.com](mailto:hubbards4@btinternet.com)

Thank you once again, for your continued support!



**CospaceRobot**  
Bridging Virtual and Reality



**BECCLES  
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# Cross Trust Competitions Update!

## Success for Beccles at “Fame Lab”



On Wednesday 3 February 2015, there was a chance for us to compete against the other two schools once again in the latest Cross Trust Competition - “Fame Lab”.

Young scientists, from years 7, 8 and 9 had just 3 minutes to make a presentation about a scientific topic of their choice and were judged on four criteria:

1. Scientific Content
2. Quality of research / preparation
3. Clarity of presentation
4. How engaging was the presentation



The confidence shown during all the presentations, coupled with the knowledge of their chosen areas made the task of judging the competition a tough one. The unenviable task was taken on by a team of

3 judges, led by head judge Dr Rachael Martin,

who holds a BSc (Hons) in Psychology and Sociology, an MSc in Psychology and a PhD in Psychology. There was a wide range of presentation styles on show, from informative ones about the Solar System, the extinction of bees and the teenage brain, experiment led presentations about the science of magic and how our mouth perceives hot and cold, through to fun experiments which left the presenters (and some members of the audience!) in a mess.

The Year 7 winners were a team from Saxmundham who created an “indestructible balloon”! They first demonstrated popping an ordinary balloon with a needle and then popping a balloon over a candle. They then explained the science behind their “super balloon”, which was filled with water. When a balloon is filled with water it lowers the tension of the balloon and so a needled can pass through it without popping it. Also when filled with water; the balloon can be lowered onto a flame without bursting because water is a super conductor and so the water conducts the heat through the thin layer of the balloon. Both worked fine in theory, however one drenched presenter later (after putting a needle in a water balloon above her head) shows that scientific experiments don’t always

work in practice! They did manage to demonstrate it working later on though.

There were two year 8 winners because the judges couldn’t choose between them. The 1st winner was Luke from Ixworth who explained the science behind some popular magic tricks, before his presentation culminated in him setting fire to a £20 note! The 2nd winner was Milo from Beccles who took us on a journey though the teenage brain and the science behind the changes that happen to it.

The Year 9 competition was again very closely run. The Saxmundham team proceeded to walk on water... well actually walk on custard, to show the density of different materials. A very entertaining, if a little messy presentation, but they narrowly missed out to the Beccles team of Nick and Tom who taught us about hot and cold sensations of food. Why do different foods feel hot or cold in our mouth? Why do we get temperature sensations from food? These questions were all answered in the three minutes and to prove a point there was even a whole chilli consumed!



The overall bragging rights for the team winners went to us! The shield is now being proudly displayed at school, a huge well done to all those who represented the school and an extra special well done to Tom, Nick and Milo who received additional praise for their excellent presentations.



## Lightning Chess – Thursday 11 December

Before Christmas, a group of students from Beccles Free School, who had been selected to represent the school, competed against Ixworth and Saxmundham in one of the Cross Trust Competitions, "Lightning Chess".

The "Lightning Chess" tournament saw each player play four games against players from the other two schools, with each match-up lasting a maximum of seven minutes; a giant countdown clock on the big screen added to the tension of the competition. Student adjudicators were on hand to keep scores during the matches, with the winning player being decided by either beating their opponent with a "checkmate" or by having the greater amount of points at the end of the seven minutes. Points were awarded depending on how many opposition pieces were captured, with the valuable Queen receiving the most points for a player.

All the points were added up at the end, and the winning students in each year group were as follows:

Year 7 – Rowan Mitchell-Cotts (Saxmundham) and James Larder (Ixworth)

Year 8 – Daniel Sillett (Ixworth) and Domanik Watts (Ixworth)

Year 9 – Champion Mitchell-Cotts (Saxmundham) and Tim Chester (Ixworth)

The bragging rights on this occasion went to Team Ixworth who won the overall title and took home the shield which is proudly displayed in their school.



# eSafety

Over the coming editions of the newsletter, we plan to share vital information about keeping children safe online. Here is the first of many...

**Social networking is all about** - being social. How amazing is it that we can now talk so freely and easily with people from other countries with diverse cultures, connect with other like-minded professionals, collaborate across these as on educational projects?

Different social networks allow for a variety of information sharing, for example apps such as Instagram and Snapchat allow for sharing of photographs, Twitter allows you to send an update, make a comment or ask a question in 140 characters, Vine allows for a few seconds of video, and Facebook just wants to do everything for everyone. All of these Social Networks rely on having "friends" or "followers". In other words these are people that follow you so that they can read your updates and perhaps have a discussion or share items of interest.

**It's against the law for under 13's.** This is a myth; there is a law in the United States called COPPA (Children's Online Privacy and Protection Act) which, amongst other things says that it is against the law to collect (harvest) personal information from children under the age of 13 to use for targeted advertising. Because social networks are unable to prevent this, they make it policy (terms and conditions) that under-13's cannot have a profile.

## Should I let my child use social networking?

Remember that many social networks will have an age policy, so the first thing to do is to find out what the lower age limit is. Predominantly the lower age limit is 13 but some are higher. We do not recommend allowing an under-age user to have a social networking account, not least of which is because they can be opened up to all sorts of unsavoury content. The trouble we have here is that many children under the age of 13 will want to be where their friends are, and many of those friends are using social networks.

This presents parents with a dilemma. Do you allow it and keep it out in the open, or do you say no and run the risk of your child creating a profile on a social network behind your back? If the latter there is an increased level of risk, particularly if something goes wrong and your child is too afraid to come and talk to you. Or, do you say yes and therefore tell children that it's okay to flaunt the terms and conditions? This is a real moral dilemma. Added to this there is the issue that we can't wrap our children up in cotton wool to protect them because that simply doesn't work. There's always an argument that children know more about technology than parents. Even if this is true for you, it's irrelevant. Remember, it's about behaviour. Children don't always understand what risk is or how to respond to risk; due to their inquisitive nature some children may be more risky with the things they do and who they talk to; and schools are having to deal with a significant amount of fallout by children due to inappropriate comments, misunderstandings and to some extent, bullying.



# Medication

In keeping with Trust policy, all medication should be handed in to the main office and an authorisation form completed by parent/carer to administer this.

## IMPORTANT TO NOTE...

### Attendance and Punctuality

Our Attendance and Punctuality Policy is underpinned by the following expectation:

**The ideal is for every student to achieve 100% presence at school;** this includes appointments, which should wherever possible be out of school hours.

Students need to understand the importance of attendance and punctuality as employability skills. Students will be made aware of their attendance levels and be expected to engage in regular dialogue with their tutors;

\* Please report absences to the school office no later than 9a.m.

ATTENDANCE



LEARNING



PROGRESS



ACHIEVEMENT

# School Uniform

**The Trust believes in the following principles with regard to uniform:**

- We are preparing students for the world of work – they need to learn to have a smart appearance and to follow dress codes.
- Their attitude to this may affect their employability;
- We want our students to have a sense of pride in their school and themselves. A pride in the uniform is one small part of this.

# Communication

Your child's tutor should be your first point of contact for any queries or concerns regarding your child. Please leave a message at the school office or email the school (using the Tutor's name as a Subject Title) at [enquiries@becclesfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@becclesfreeschool.org.uk) and your message will be passed on. Our school voicemail service is regularly monitored so feel free to leave a message.

## contact us...

We welcome your feedback, news and comments... e-mail us at [enquiries@becclesfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@becclesfreeschool.org.uk) or on Twitter  @BecclesFS

## Lost property reminder

Please ensure all items of clothing and equipment are clearly labelled. Lost property will be returned to students, sold as second hand uniform or used as spares if unclaimed after half a term.