



The Kings Journal

October Issue • The Autumn Update

Welcome to the October edition of The Kings Journal! This month, our third edition is your guide to school life at Kings of Wessex — juggling work and clubs, using tech smartly, and exploring learning beyond the classroom.



Photo by Cynara Weavell

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We have now reached the end of our second month back at school, and October has been a time of settling in, growing confidence, and new experiences. With routines now firmly in place, students have found their rhythm in lessons and activities, building on the fresh start September brought. The early mornings and busy schedules feel more familiar, and the focus has shifted from simply adjusting to school life to making real progress in learning, personal goals, and extracurricular pursuits.

This month has been full of exciting opportunities across the school. Focus Day gave students the chance to explore new skills and interests, while the Careers Fair encouraged everyone to think about future pathways and potential careers. The King's Sixth Open Evening and Taster Day offered a glimpse into life beyond GCSEs, helping students make informed choices about the next steps in their education. Alongside these special events, everyday lessons, clubs, and sports activities have continued to provide challenges and opportunities to grow, fostering creativity, teamwork, and resilience.

Looking back, October has been a month of progress, momentum, and reflection. It has shown how quickly students have settled back into the rhythm of school life and how much can be achieved in just a few weeks when energy and focus come together. As we move into the next stage of the term, there is a real sense of purpose, ambition, and excitement for all that lies ahead, building on the foundations laid over these first two months of the school year.

Last Month At School

October has been filled with a wide range of exciting activities and events, offering something to engage and inspire every year group. From the recent Focus Day, where students explored new skills and revision techniques, to the Careers Fair that encouraged future ambitions, it's been a busy few weeks. The King's Sixth Open Evening and Taster Day also gave students a glimpse into life beyond GCSEs, helping them think about their next steps.

Focus Day

Students took a day away from the usual timetable with their tutors, focusing on learning more effectively. The session included study skills, revision techniques, strategies to help across all subjects, and mindful colouring to support relaxation and focus.

Careers Fair

Our annual Careers Fair gave students the chance to explore a wide range of organisations, from the Army and businesses like Thatchers Cider and Specsavers, to the local leisure centre. Each stand offered the opportunity to ask questions, learn about different pathways, and pick up some free resources along the way.

Sixth Form Opportunities

Kings Sixth Form Open Evening gave students and parents the chance to explore the Sixth Form centre and find out more about the opportunities available. Classrooms were opened across a range of subjects, allowing visitors to see lessons in action and get a real sense of the learning environment. Current Sixth Form students ran stalls throughout the evening, answering questions, sharing their experiences, and offering advice about choosing subjects and managing Sixth Form life. The event gave everyone the opportunity to see what life in the Sixth Form is really like, helping Year 11 students make informed decisions about their next steps.

With so many exciting events having taken place this month, students have had plenty of opportunities to learn, explore, and prepare for the future. From discovering new passions during Focus Day to developing important skills at the Careers Fair, and gaining insight into post-16 life at the King's Sixth Open Evening and Taster Day, it's been a busy and inspiring few weeks for everyone involved.

Keeping Up, Logging On, and Looking Ahead

Balancing Schoolwork and Extracurriculars!

For many pupils, school life is a constant balancing act. There is homework to complete, tests to prepare for, and deadlines that seem to appear out of nowhere. On top of that, most students take part in extracurricular activities such as sports teams, drama productions, music lessons, coding clubs, or volunteering. These activities are enjoyable and rewarding, but they can make the school week feel quite full.

Learning to balance schoolwork with extracurricular commitments is an essential skill. It teaches responsibility, organisation, and time-management – qualities that not only help now, but continue to be useful long after school finishes. Planning ahead can make an enormous difference. Instead of letting tasks build up, spreading work across the week keeps things manageable and reduces stress.

Extracurricular activities are important in their own right. They give students a chance to develop skills that the classroom cannot always provide, such as leadership, teamwork, creativity, and perseverance. They also offer a break from academic pressure, helping to improve mental wellbeing. Many pupils find that after a club or sports session, they are more energised and focused when returning to their homework.

It is also important to know your limits. Although it is tempting to join everything, taking on too much can lead to stress and tiredness. Balance does not mean doing every activity available; it means choosing what you genuinely enjoy and can commit to without feeling overwhelmed. When pupils find the right mix, school becomes far more fulfilling and enjoyable.



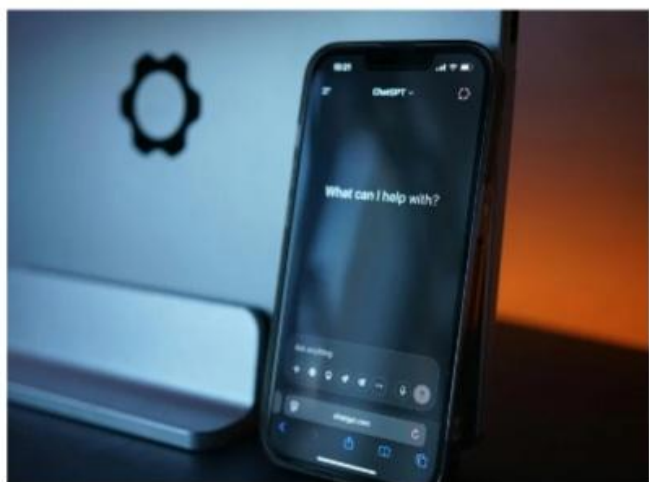
Using AI Wisely

Artificial intelligence has quickly become a common tool in education, and many pupils use it without thinking twice. AI can explain complex topics, summarise long notes, suggest ways to structure essays, and generate practice questions for revision. When used thoughtfully, it can make studying more efficient and help clarify difficult ideas. However, the way AI is used matters. It can support learning, but it cannot replace it.

Copying answers directly from AI might feel like a convenient shortcut, but it does not lead to real understanding, and it becomes obvious when pupils are asked to work independently in class or in exams. Schools are also becoming increasingly aware of how AI-generated work looks, and there can be consequences for relying on it too heavily.

The most effective approach is to use AI as an assistant rather than a writer. It is there to help you learn, not to do your thinking for you. Asking AI to explain something in simpler terms, check your grammar, or create revision materials can be incredibly helpful. But your ideas, your analysis, and your understanding should remain your own.

Learning to use AI sensibly now is also useful for the future. As technology continues to develop, the ability to work alongside AI, use it responsibly, and judge when it is appropriate will be an important skill in many areas of life.



The Year 11 Geography Trip: What Happened and Why You Should Look Forward to It

This year's Year 11 geography trip was a memorable and enjoyable day out, giving pupils the chance to see real examples of geographical processes rather than just reading about them in textbooks. After leaving Cheddar, the 45-minute coach journey took us to Bristol Harbour, where the day began with a canal boat tour along part of the River Avon.

During the boat trip, pupils analysed the infrastructure surrounding the harbour, taking in the bridges, the renovated warehouses, and the various developments along the water's edge. The guide on board provided a steady stream of interesting facts about the area, explaining how Bristol's history, economy, and transport links have shaped the harbour over time. Being able to observe these features directly made many of the topics studied in class feel far more relevant and easier to understand.

Once the tour finished, everyone disembarked and moved into the next part of the day: surveying the land and the people. Students gathered data on the environment, land use, and how the area is used by locals and tourists. A quick lunch break nearby gave everyone a chance to relax before continuing with their fieldwork.

After completing the surveys and collecting the last of the data, the group made their way back to the coach for the return trip to school. Although it was only a single day out, the experience left a lasting impression. Pupils found it easier to grasp geographical concepts after seeing them in a real setting, and many said the trip helped bring the subject to life.

For future students, the trip is definitely something to look forward to. It provides hands-on experience, a clearer understanding of GCSE topics, and a refreshing break from classroom learning. Even better, it is simply an enjoyable day out with your friends – one that mixes learning with real exploration.

Exploring Your Future: Universities and Careers

Planning for life after school can feel overwhelming, but starting early can make a big difference. Understanding your options — from university courses to vocational pathways and careers — helps you make informed choices and feel confident about your next steps.

Visiting universities, researching courses online, and attending talks or fairs are all valuable ways to explore what might suit you best. Each university has its own unique environment, specialisms, and opportunities, so looking beyond the course description can give a better sense of what life would actually be like there. Many students also find it useful to talk to current students, either online or in person, to hear honest advice about studying, accommodation, and social life.

Career exploration is just as important. Work experience, internships, and volunteering give practical insight into different industries and help develop skills that will be useful in any job. Even simple steps like researching a profession online, watching videos, or attending workshops can clarify what a role actually involves.

It's also worth remembering that university is not the only route to success. Apprenticeships, technical colleges, and vocational courses offer excellent pathways into rewarding careers, often allowing students to earn while they learn. The key is to explore a wide range of options and match them to your interests, strengths, and goals.

By starting your exploration early, you give yourself time to make decisions, try out different experiences, and feel prepared for life after school. The future can seem daunting, but with research, planning, and curiosity, it becomes an exciting opportunity to discover the path that suits you best.



Charities Week: Fun, Friends, and Fundraising



Charities Week is always a highlight at school, bringing students and staff together to raise money for good causes while enjoying a week full of exciting activities. Every year comes with a new theme, giving everyone a chance to get creative, try something different, and immerse themselves in the fun.

One of the main attractions is the house fair. Each house sets up its own stalls, packed with games, competitions, and delicious treats. From challenging your friends at fun games to picking up cakes and other sweet treats, there is plenty to do for everyone. Face painting is also a favourite, with colourful designs turning students into everything from superheroes to animals, adding an extra burst of creativity to the event. The fair is a great way to celebrate house spirit, enjoy friendly competition, and get involved in something that brings the whole school together.

Another major highlight is the big concert. Teachers and students perform on the stage in the hall, showcasing singing, dancing, and other hidden talents. The performances are full of energy and laughter, with surprises and impromptu moments that make it impossible not to get swept up in the excitement. Whether you are watching from the audience or taking part on stage, the concert is one of the most memorable events of the week.

Depending on the theme, some students and staff go all out with costumes, dressing up to match the idea of the year. This adds a bright and playful atmosphere to the week, making every day feel special. Between the concerts, fairs, games, and dressing up, Charities Week is packed with opportunities to have fun, work together, and support worthwhile causes.

With creativity, energy, and teamwork at the heart of every activity, Charities Week offers something for everyone. It's a week where students can let loose, enjoy each other's company, and contribute to making a real difference — all while creating memories that last long after the events have finished.



The Autumn Routine Poem

The poem *Second Month Back* explores what it feels like to settle into school life after the busy first few weeks. It shows how the excitement of returning fades into a steady rhythm of lessons, routines, and small moments of change. The images of autumn leaves and quieter halls suggest that things are slowing down, but not in a bad way — it's a time to find balance and focus. Overall, the poem captures how the second month back can feel calmer and more comfortable, as everyone starts to feel at home again.

Second Month Back

The halls hum softer now,
September's rush has faded.
Pencils lie like soldiers, neat,
and notebooks, half-invaded.
The timetables feel carved in stone,
the days loop, bell to bell—
yet in the quiet between the tasks,
a spark still flickers well.
The leaves begin their secret turn,
from green to whispered gold,
and on the playground's edge we learn
that change can still be bold.
We've found our pace, our rhythm sure,
in lessons, laughs, and plans—
October hums—less wild, more pure—
the year unfolds in hands.

Thank you for reading the October 2025 edition of The Kings Journal.
A month of progress, engagement, and shared experiences at The Kings
of Wessex Academy.

New experiences, lessons, and achievements waiting!

Edited and designed by Cynara Weavell. With thanks to the
students and staff who contributed.

Weavell