

19th December 2025

Headteacher

Responsible, Resilient, Ambitious

In this bulletin, there is further information confirming the two week half term in October 2026. This is something many schools have moved to, in order to break up the very long Autumn term. It will allow students and staff to have an opportunity to reset and refresh, as well as many other benefits. We are finalising the details around CPD days, but the term dates published in this bulletin will not change. The Year 11 Mock timetable is also attached to this email, and student's timetables are also on Bromcom.

Our end of term awards assemblies this week were the biggest ever with awards for many of our student's achievements, as well as certificates from St John's Ambulance first aid, national writing awards and certificates from our success in the computing competition.

Christmas jumper and lunch day was a huge success – thank you to the restaurant team for their hard work throughout the year and managing to serve over 300 full Christmas lunches in 60 minutes! As I write this excitement is building in preparation for the pantomime today. Tickets are still available on the door.

This has been a very good year for Ixworth High School and our students. This could not have been achieved without the support of our amazing staff and parents – thank you to you all.

We started in January 2025 fully staffed but with a covered short-term gap in one subject. The mock exams for Year 11 were already showing a significant improvement in grades compared to 2024. By March 2025, Year 11 were taking full advantage of the improved staffing and curriculum offer and they were well on track for the results they went on to achieve in August.

By February, we had been visited by the Trust leadership who recognised and shared our view that the school had made progress, and we were now likely good or improving in all areas. In April we were visited by Ofsted, and we were indeed, judged as good in all areas with two areas identified as close to outstanding.

Our departing Year 11s added to our accolades as a school by adding 6% to the number of students achieving a grade 4 in English and Maths, and 9% to those achieving a grade 5 compared to 2024. Overall, they added almost a grade to every subject they took compared to the previous year. There were 12 Grade 9s, the highest grades possible and only awarded to the top 5% of students taking GCSEs.

Our student's GCSE results placed us in the top twenty most improved schools in England for attainment and attainment in English; in English 70% of our students achieved a grade 4 or higher. Our Maths attainment was the highest recorded at Ixworth.

In the summer a group of students took part in the Sapientia Trust expedition to Borneo, an amazing opportunity that our students fully embraced, with Ixworth being one of the largest cohorts from one of the smallest schools in the Trust. The trip was self-funded with some students securing the entire cost from external sponsorship, demonstrating responsibility and resilience beyond their years. In 2027 the expedition is to Kenya and again we are currently one of the largest groups taking part.

Only two members of staff left the school in August, the lowest number of departing staff ever. We recruited well, for one position we had 22 good quality applicants in a time of a national recruitment crisis for teaching. In September, strong recruitment meant we remained fully staffed but also added to our administrative and pastoral teams. We have also recruited two further peripatetic music teachers for drums and guitar.

In September we refreshed our school values, adding Resilient, Responsible and Ambitious to Ready, Respectful and Safe. Our Year 11s (2025) quickly embraced these values, "demanding" revision sessions be launched in September; the earliest they have ever been requested and now with the highest attendance ever.

We have an increasing number of sports fixtures with local schools, with mixed but increasing success; we were second this week in a dodgeball competition. We secured sponsorship for our football and netball uniforms by Vehicle Works Ixworth and hamabeads.com respectively.

19th December 2025

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We have supported other schools through sharing good practice, we have staff that are examiners in GCSE subjects and have subject coordinators for Sapientia Trust. Our uniform is used as a good example by uniform suppliers and has been replicated for independent schools. We are used as an example of excellent inclusive practice by the Suffolk Education Partnership.

We have visits from Dr Peter Prinsley, MP, Joanna Spicer MBE (County Councilor), Ben Lord (Ixworth Parish Council), and Julia Grainger (SCC Assistant Director of Education), to name a few. All have met and been thoroughly impressed with the conduct and values that our students demonstrate every day. It is important we engage with these visitors to ensure that we are at the front of the queue for any resources or funding, particularly grants associated with local housing developments.

Our enrichment offer goes from strength to strength, with enhanced careers advice and guidance, more structured key stage 3 enrichment lessons and subject linked trips. Our summer enrichment offer includes overseas trips and several residential trips, as well as a range of activities locally and in school.

Finally, the Year 7 numbers for 2026 were released earlier this month and we are “bucking the trend” in terms of declining pupil numbers in Suffolk, with a very healthy Year 7 intake planned for 2026.

Once again thank you for your continued and valued support for our school. Together we have made significant progress this year, but we are not complacent about the further improvements we need to make to deliver a world class education at Ixworth, I look forward to working with you next year.

Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mr Gibb

Headteacher

Sapientia Education Trust- Term Dates 2025/26:

Autumn Term:

- **Starts: Thursday 3rd September 2026**
- **Half-Term: 19th October - 30th October 2026**
- **Last day: Friday 18th December 2026**

Spring Term:

- **Starts: Tuesday 5th January 2027**
- **Half-Term: 15th February- 19th February 2027**
- **Last Day: Thursday 25th March 2027**

Summer Term:

- **Starts: Monday 12th April 2027**
- **Bank Holiday/ School Closed: 3rd May**
- **Half-Term: 31st May - 4th June 2027**
- **Last Day – Friday 23rd July 2027**

**Pastoral Notices**19th December 2025**Student Related Enquiries**

General enquiries about students or student-related incidents should always in the FIRST instance go to their Tutor. If for any reason this does not resolve the issue, please then contact the Head of Upper or Lower school, whichever is relevant to your child.

Student Absence

Student absences should still be registered with the School Office Team- aaa@ixworthhighschool.org by 9:00 am.

Lost Property

Items of lost property will be kept at the school Office. Please ensure you have all school uniform and sports kit clearly marked with your child's name on the inside of the item.

Safeguarding

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Miss Burgess, she is contactable via the school office. We continue to push on high levels of attendance for our students across the school and in Forge. Thank you to the parents and carers in our community who support their children to make the right choice every day. Research tells us that 95% plus attendance adds one grade, on average at GCSE.

Below you will see the link to our Attendance and Punctuality Policy. This can be accessed on our website under Policies.

<https://www.ixworthhighschool.org/assets/Documents/Attachments/Attendance-and-Punctuality-Policy-2024.pdf>

Uniform

Ixworth is very proud of its uniform, the students look superb and many of our visitors have commented on how professional students look in their uniform, how well presented they are and how impressed they are with their interactions.

While we recognise that items get damaged or lost, it is expected that all students arrive to school with their full uniform from the first day back. Please ensure that items are in line with the schools' expectations (This can be found on our website with useful guidance around the specific items and their appearance).

Link to website: [Uniform - Ixworth High School](#)

Key Dates**Week beginning 5th January is Week B on our timetable**

5th-6th January PD Day- STAFF ONLY

22nd January Year 10 Progress Evening

26th January- 6th February Year 11 Mocks

12th February Year 9 Progress Evening

16th February Half Term

19th December 2025

Subject Spotlight- Science and Careers

Subject- Science

Why is your subject important in this key stage?

KS3 Science is a crucial time to spark curiosity, critical thinking and to learn important practical skills to carry students through their time at Secondary school.

Any teaching methods/strategies that would help people understand how teaching is taking place (implementation of curriculum)?

- Practical investigations using indicators such as Litmus paper and Universal indicator.
- Linking knowledge to everyday acids and alkalis to make learning relevant (e.g. sour sweets, shampoo, soap)
- Looking for hazard symbols in the home and recalling what they mean.

What are students covering in the Key stage/course? Any overarching themes, skills, concepts that are trying to be achieved.

Topic: Acids and Alkalies

The Y7 Acids and alkalis topics aims to teach students how to identify hazard symbols, understand how to use a pH scale, classify everyday chemicals as acids and alkalis, and explain how neutralisation reactions occur. Students are learning how to use equipment such as pipettes and measuring cylinders, as well as how to handle chemicals safely. Students are learning how to make scientific observations, interpret results and come to their own conclusions.

How this fits into the wider subject curriculum.

- Students gain transferable practical skills for KS3 and KS4 topics.
- Students' knowledge of acids and alkalis is developed further at GCSE.

Any competitions/House comps/ Homework you are running/have run and their results or aims.

Homework this half term will be: Tassomai

- Top 10 students to be published in the bulletin and in tutor time (based on points achieved each week).
- Tassomai postcards awarded in tutor time
- Science class leaderboards published in tutor time
- House points given for 100% weekly goal each week

How can parents support or extend their child in your subject?

- Encourage daily goal completion on Tassomai.
- Encourage conversations about learning.
- When completed booklets are brought home, encourage self-quizzing using the glossary of keywords at the front and the retrieval practice questions at the back.

19th December 2025

Anything current in the news, new books or research links to websites etc. that students might find interesting/useful to access their studies or provide wider context and skills.

Websites for Wider Context:

- BBC Bitesize KS3 Science.
- Crash Course Kids videos on YouTube

Careers links/ties to post-16/university etc.

Skills developed in Science lead to careers in:

Forensics, medicine, research, education, engineering, mechanics, hairdressing and MANY more!

Post-16 pathways:

- A-Level Biology, Chemistry or Physics.
- BTEC in Applied Science
- Apprenticeships
- University degrees



19th December 2025**Subject: Careers****Why is your subject important in this key stage?**

Careers education gives young people the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make informed choices about their future. It helps students see a pathway beyond school and prepares them for adult life.

Any teaching methods/strategies that would help people understand how teaching is taking place (implementation of curriculum)?

During Careers, we use many teaching methods & strategies that make learning visible for all students at Ixworth High School.

Here are just a few with examples:

1. Learning Intentions & Success Criteria:

Start every lesson by stating what students are learning and how they will know they've learned it. This helps students understand lesson purpose and gives observers clear focus points.

"We are learning how to identify healthy vs unhealthy relationship behaviours. You will know you've learned it when you can categorise behaviours and justify your choices."

2. Clear Routines & Safe Classroom Culture:

Predictable structure, calm behaviour management, and clear expectations help students focus and feel safe—particularly important in PSHE.

3. Real-Life Scenarios & Role Play:

Students apply knowledge to realistic situations, making learning embedded and memorable.

Observers can see whether students understand the content deeply enough to apply it.

4. Student Voice & Reflection

Students reflect on what they learned and how they learned it.

Shows metacognition and helps teachers adapt future lessons.

Examples:

Learning journals

"One thing I learned today..."

"One question I still have..."

5. Retrieval Practice

Short activities that ask students to recall prior learning (e.g., "last lesson recap").

Demonstrates progression and strengthens memory.


 19th December 2025

What are students covering in the Key stage/course? Any overarching themes, skills, concepts that are trying to be achieved.

As students move from Year 7 to Year 11, they learn more about careers and start preparing for their future.

Year 7 – Be Aware

- Settling into school and getting to know people
- Starting to think about the future
- Learning what skills they already have
- Noticing how subjects link to careers

Year 8 – Prepare

- Personal development and confidence
- Understanding that skills are used in everyday life
- Learning who can help with careers questions
- Being curious about possibilities

Year 9 – Discover

- Exploring options for GCSE subjects
- Finding out what strengths they have
- Seeing where subjects could lead
- Thinking about pathways and goals

Year 10 – Experience

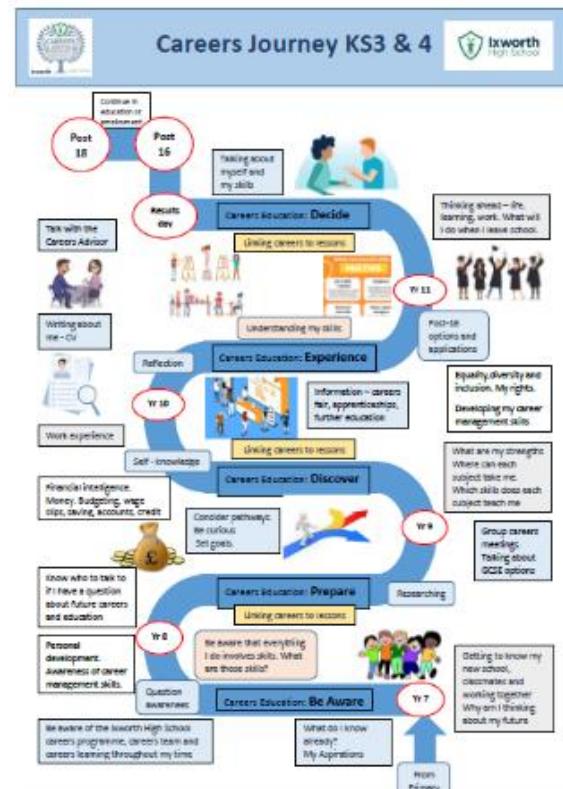
- Work experience, careers fairs and employer talks
- Starting to understand their own skills better
- Linking lessons with jobs
- Reflecting on experiences

Year 11 – Decide

- Thinking about life after school
- Post-16 choices and applications
- Talking about skills and interests
- Preparing for results day
- Planning where to go next: college, sixth form, apprenticeship, or training

After Year 11 (Post-16 and Post-18)

- students continue in education or training
- careers support continues to help them make future decisions



19th December 2025**How this fits into the wider subject curriculum.**

Careers fit into the whole curriculum because every subject can show how learning connects to real jobs, skills and future opportunities. Careers are taught through lessons, tutor time, events, visits and guidance. It builds year on year, supports personal development and prepares students for adult life. Careers education isn't just one lesson or one event — it is part of every subject.

Each subject can show:

- what jobs use that subject
- what skills students are developing
- examples from real workplaces

This makes lessons feel relevant and answers:

“Why am I learning this?”

2. Careers Supports Personal Development

Careers helps students build:

- confidence
- communication
- resilience
- teamwork
- decision-making

These skills help in:

- learning
- relationships
- future employment
- adult life

Any competitions/House comps/ Homework you are running/have run and their results or aims.

For homework, after each topic, a homework will be set to promote PSHE and the topics that the students have worked through over the term. These will then be displayed to promote positive views on topics covering from year 7-11. Our homework allows students to use different media types that help and explore different career paths through PSHE.

How can parents support or extend their child in your subject?

Parents and carers are the most influential factor in a young person's career decisions. What they say, do, value and model at home has a powerful impact. Careers education works best when school and home, work together.

1. Encourage conversations about the future

- interests, strengths and favourite subjects
- possible job roles and pathways

19th December 2025

- hopes and plans

These conversations build confidence and reduce anxiety about decisions.

2. Support with information and decision-making

- exploring different post-16 options (sixth form, college, apprenticeships, T Levels)
- looking at entry requirements together
- attending school careers events, options evenings and open days
- helping with applications or personal statements

3. Challenge stereotypes and keep options open

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure young people:
- believe they can follow any route, regardless of gender, background or ability
- don't limit themselves because of myths, misinformation or stereotypes
- Encouraging open-mindedness supports equality of opportunity.

4. Promote skills and independence at home

Everyday life offers learning opportunities that support careers development:

- organisation (homework, equipment, planning)
- money management
- travel independence
- resilience and problem-solving
- communication and teamwork

These skills are just as important as academic grades.

5. Support participation in school opportunities

- work experience (Year 10)
- employer talks
- extracurricular activities
- careers fairs
- volunteering
- part-time work (where appropriate)
- Participation builds confidence, networks and experience.

6. Maintain high aspirations and realistic expectations

- positive about the future
- realistic about strengths and areas for growth
- encouraging without pressure
- willing to explore alternatives
- Aspirations matter — every young person benefits from someone who believes in them.

7. Stay informed about careers education

- read school updates about careers
- understand pathways and qualifications
- ask questions if unsure

19th December 2025

Anything current in the news, new books or research links to websites etc. that students might find interesting/useful to access their studies or provide wider context and skills.

A new chapter for career guidance: updated Gatsby Benchmarks adopted into government guidance for schools, colleges and ITPs.

The Department for Education published updated guidance confirming that, from September 2025, all secondary schools, colleges and independent training providers (ITPs) will be expected to use the updated Gatsby Benchmarks to shape their careers programmes. This marks an exciting new chapter for careers guidance in England.

Schools must meet:

- Gatsby Benchmarks
- Ofsted Personal Development
- Statutory guidance for careers

This ensures students get:

- employer encounters
- career and labour market information
- personal guidance
- curriculum careers links

Careers links/ties to post-16/university etc.

During the duration of your child's education at Ixworth High School they will experience careers in many ways raising their ambitions, building resilience and allowing them to take responsibility for their own education and future pathways.

Careers

Please check out our website for work experience, post-16 and updated news from Suffolk and Norfolk.

[Up-to-date Careers News - Ixworth High School](#)

For work experience, please complete the online form once a placement has been found.

[Work Experience - Ixworth High School](#)

[Y10 Work Experience Application 2025-2026](#)