



Budding news reporter Charlie gets the inside story...



BBC School Report

Schools the length and breadth of the country were invited to take part, in this year's BBC School Report, although the map on the BBC website showed just one school representing Bassetlaw... ours!



Vice Principal, Jason White, who leads on transition, told us that the day had been a complete success. "Links with our family of schools in particular are very strong, and it's encouraging to see that recruitment from almost every feeder school is up for next year. Students join us from around 30 different primaries each year, and they settle really quickly. I was delighted to see so many of them in the West Side Story cast, just six months after joining the school."

Red Nose Day

Funny hair and loud ties were the order of the day for this year's Red Nose Day. Cake sales held at both the Elizabethan main site and Retford Post 16 added to the total. Having moved away from the traditional, rather easy non-uniform day, students are really challenging themselves to find innovative ways of raising money with various events across the day.

Year 10 Careers Update

March saw the arrival of the long awaited BIBA at Retford Post 16. Described as "more than a careers event, this could be a life-changing experience", the Big Ideas Big Ambitions event saw more than forty employers, universities and apprenticeship providers gather at the Centre to offer advice to young people from across Bassetlaw. The Elizabethan took the whole of Year 10 to the event. They were joined by a group of budding engineers from Year 9 who were given priority tickets to the University of Sheffield's MANTRA (manufacturing transporter) lorry.

Congratulations go to Summer Askew who completed the careers quiz at the event and won a massive hamper of jellybeans donated by the owner of Jellybean Campers, who gave the keynote speech at the event.



Hot on the heels of BIBA came the Year 10 Employability Day, where students were challenged to provide evidence of some of the key, transferrable skills that employers are seeking. There was also an exciting teamwork challenge which tested students' ability to work together.

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BBC School Report



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BIBA

**Big Ideas.
Big Ambitions.**

The Elizabethan Choir



West Side Glory

The Elizabethan showed yet again why it has been awarded ArtsMark status by Arts Council England, with four fantastic performances of the legendary musical *West Side Story*.

Set against the backdrop of racial tensions in 1960s New York, the play is a re-telling of the classic Romeo and Juliet story... complete with tragic ending. The young cast had to master singing and dancing, as well as US and Puerto Rican accents, and their enthusiasm was infectious.

As if a show like *West Side Story* wasn't complex enough, Director Neil Brownhill chose a traverse stage for the production. This meant that the audience were seated on both sides of the stage, and required a whole new style of acting. It gave the show a very fresh feel and broke down many of the traditional barriers that exist between cast and audience.

Jaymee Cobb and Elysia Wood shared the role of Maria. Despite only being in Year 9, Elysia is no stranger to being centre stage, as she was the soloist when the Elizabethan Choir won its (tenth) award at the Worksoop Festival last year. "When it got closer to the performance, we were rehearsing three times a week. It was a punishing schedule, but I loved every minute of it! I'd really like to do something on the stage when I'm older."

Jaymee, a Year 12 student at Retford Post 16, has already played the lead in the Elizabethan's productions of *Phantom of the Opera* and *Hairspray*, as well as well as being selected for the Youth Music Theatre summer school last year. She told us "I enjoy exploring how feelings and emotions can be portrayed in different ways through drama, and it was interesting to see how a younger cast did this too.

There are certainly plenty of different emotions to explore in *West Side Story!*"



Two actors shared the role of Tony too. Until *West Side Story*, Year 13 student Billy Lethbridge had never appeared on stage before. "Playing the lead gave me a massive boost of confidence. I haven't sung in front of anyone since Year 5, and I am definitely going to carry on with it. I am hoping to go to university next year to study History, but I will definitely keep my drama going."

Sam Adams from Year 10 is more likely to be found playing electric guitar rather than the romantic lead in a big name musical. However, his experience of *West Side Story* has given him the acting bug, and he says he'd love to do more acting in the future. "It was a fantastic experience. It was quite challenging, as the singing is very different to what I'm used to. However, it was good to share the role with another actor, as you can bounce ideas off each other."

West Side Story was greeted with standing ovations on each of the four nights, and there was barely a dry eye in the house when the cast returned to the stage at the end to reprise the classic *Somewhere*, such was the power of their performance.

Academy Principal, Christine Horrocks, said the professionalism of the show and the maturity of the performances from students as young as eleven was inspiring. "Anyone who saw the show will understand why the arts are so important in education. Head of Ofsted, Amanda Spielman, has said that schools should offer 'an education that is broad, rich and deep'... and *West Side Story* is one of the many examples of this at the Elizabethan."



Choir hits the high notes... again

The Academy choir's domination of the Worksoop Festival continues with its eleventh straight victory. This year's competition came just a fortnight after *West Side Story*, so rehearsal time was limited. However, the choir maintained the high standards it set at previous competitions, performing 'Viva La Vida' by Coldplay and 'For Good' from *Wicked* to great praise from the judges.

