

# OSCA'S ENRICHMENT NEWSLETTER

Academics | Clubs | Sports



## English

On the 1st of November, 90 year 11 students experienced - for the first time - a real university-style lecture exploring key aspects of Shakespeare's play *Much Ado About Nothing*. The lecture was delivered by Professor David Roberts from Birmingham City University who congratulated the cohort on being such an 'attentive' audience. Professor Roberts was pleased to receive questions from students intrigued by the concepts he discussed during the lecture and has expressed an interest in returning to OSCA to deliver further taster-lectures to Key Stage 4.

During the week of October 11th, the English department embarked on an experiential immersion project, known as Project Atmosphere. This project targeted the year 9 cohort who were studying gothic literature; taking place at the end of their unit of study. The project functioned as both a final assessment and a House Competition. Each House team travelled to a different local Victorian haunt. The students worked with Sandwell Museum Service in a number of storytelling and creative writing tasks in and around the gothic sites. The winning compositions earned House Points and individual prizes. In first place was Rohan Bahia – winner of a new Kindle Fire; second place went to Niamh Long – winner of a £20 Amazon Voucher; 3rd place went to Lucy Davis – winner of a £10 Amazon Voucher.

The department is readying itself for a similar immersion experience, this time targeting the year 7 cohort during the second week of December. The year 7s (studying Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*) will be travelling to the Black Country Museum to experience a true Victorian Christmas simulation in order to better enable them to empathise and analyse the experiences of a young Ebenezer Scrooge or Tiny Tim.

The department are also happy to report the continuation of their English Star of the Week programme. Stars are chosen from each year group on a weekly basis and broadcasted in their running segment on the Newscast.

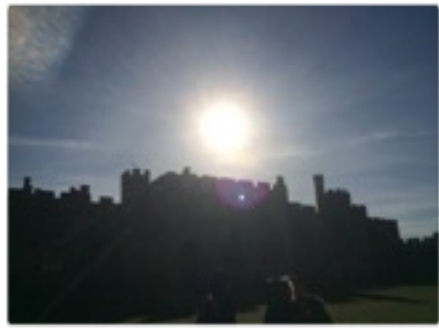
## Maths

Chess for Numeracy is a new programme that the Maths department has introduced, targeting two year 8 classes. Every Wednesday morning (beginning mid-October and stretching until February), the year 8s are joined by a chess tutor from the Chess in Schools and Communities organisation. The 32 students are learning a variety of chess based games, working with patterns and predictions in real time, as well as building their logic and strategy skills.

The Maths department have continued with their Star of the Week rewards programme and are getting ready to run their first rewards trip to Bletchley Park in a few weeks time.

## Humanities

On the 2nd of November, the History department took 45 year 11 students on a field expedition to Warwick Castle. The trip was a compulsory part of their GCSE coursework. Pupils took a tour of the dungeons, watched a live bird of prey display and had a private tour of the castles key features.



## Future Learn

Over the last half-term, 44 students have been undertaking a virtual learning course in creative writing entitled 'Start Writing Fiction'. The course takes place between 3-4 on Tuesdays, as well as over dinner time on a Thursday. As a result, during the next half-term, successful students will qualify for university certification! In addition to this, there are some exciting new opportunities on the horizon involving cross-curricular virtual learning courses which are due to begin in Geography and Science.

## Science

Prior to the end of last academic year, 12 students were selected from year 9 and 10 to travel to ACE academy to participate in the West Birmingham Science and Technology day. Once there, students enjoyed a fabulous time participating in a variety of workshops and collaboratively working with students from other schools. Out of all the students in attendance, Matie Munteanu (current year 10) and Niamh Long (current year 9) progressed through the day's challenges to secure a place in the Nationals finals. The finals are due to take place in January 2017, hosted by the University of Sheffield.

During last academic year, the STEM club participated in a 'universal' experiment called *Rocket Science* and now the results are in. The year 8 STEM club students grew 2 batches of seedlings that had been aboard the ISS (currently orbiting earth), and overall they've found only a slight decrease in growth rates between the seed that had endured space travel and those that had not. These results suggest that it could be possible to sustain plant growth in space (assuming they could find a way around zero-gravity affecting the plants' geotropism). This was quite an exciting opportunity for the students to have taken part in research with potentially massive implication for colonising the further reaches of space.

*I'm a Scientist, Get Me Out of Here* was an enrichment programme that OSCA students in year 7 participated in. A series of activities were built into the curriculum during lessons. The zone that was selected was Sports Science Zone. Over the course of their programme, students were given time to prepare questions that they would ask a 'real-life Scientist' about how sports related to science. On the 7th of November, students were given the opportunity to actually speak to some Scientists, asking brilliant questions. The Scientists were very impressed with the level of questioning the students put forward and commented that they were hopeful there were brilliant future scientists present at OSCA!

## PAPA

Following months of practice, Year 10 Drama student took part in the Shakespeare Schools' Festival, on the 31st of October. Performing 'Much Ado About Nothing' at the Old Rep Theatre in Birmingham, the 20 students involved showcased their outstanding talent and were a credit to OSCA. The group performed in front of an audience of 300 people and as part of a larger compilation of performances by other OAT Academies. Our students were asked to close the show – which was a huge complement to their hard work and commitment to the project.



Shoppers, parents, family members and staff have had the privilege of two sets of

performances by the Year 10 Music students and Year 9 Performing Arts students. The groups performed live at Tesco Superstore in Dudley, on a Saturday afternoon, the 1st of October. Those involved performed exceptionally well and were a credit to the Academy; they also seemed totally unfazed by the discovery that we were to be the only school performing at the community event. This is to be the only the first of many performances at the store and around the community. The attendance of staff members who came out to support the group was greatly appreciated: "Having so many familiar faces certainly helped to calm the nerves!"

## Creative Arts and Technology

The Art and Textiles department ran their second House Competition over the month of November. The competition was amongst the year 7 students who were challenged to design an ECO poster. The intention of the



posters were to raise awareness about the effects of pollution and the impact of our carbon footprint over time.

The winning entry was designed by Viraai Kali from Shakespeare; second place went to Thomas Atkins from Da Vinci; 3rd by Lauren Horton of Picasso; and 4th place was designed by Amy Mann from Dahl.

## Makoni's Kitchen

The Food Technology department has done it again! The doors have been opened and the competition has commenced. This year, instead of cooking High Tea, the DofE skills group has been tasked with creating a Festive Feast which they will share with friends and family on December 9th. Their inventive menus have added delightful twists to Christmas dinner staples, providing guests with a full 3 course meal. Each week, student teams are judged on the basis of overall taste and presentation; the champions will be decided on the day of the feast!

The Festive Feast Event Committee (a volunteering group) are busy planning decoration, table layouts and invitations.

Both groups are working towards their Bronze DofE Award.



## Peru 2017

On the 5th of November, the team of Year 11 students (who will be travelling to Peru this summer), joined forces with Ormiston Forge. Together, the groups travelled to North Wales for a bit of abseiling. The activity helped the group train for the Peruvian terrain (a small foothill in comparison to what they will face in July).

## Chess Club



OSCA has introduced yet another club to the Friday line-up. OSCA's first ever Chess Club. Students across all year groups have been drawn to S1 on a Friday afternoon to engage in some psychological and strategic competition. The club welcomed 18 students, of all ages, in its most recent week and even welcomed a range of teachers taking on each other as well as students.

The aim of the club is to develop critical thinking skills, planning ahead, analysing and evaluating decisions in real time. Students are given the opportunity to hone their skills whilst having fun with their peers as well as building working relationship with a range of staff.

The club is looking to kick it up a notch and will be the next House Competition in an elimination style tournament, through which individuals will fight for the right of title – OSCA Chess Champion.

Skilled players from each year group will also be selected to form OSCA's Tournament team, looking to represent the academy at regional and perhaps even national levels, come the summer term.



## More Able Gifted and Talented

The Gifted and Talented programme, at OSCA, has been busy putting the cogs in place for another excellent year of challenge – both within curriculum as well as through some exciting enrichment opportunities.

More Able, Gifted and Talented students will be going through an exciting programme this academic year!

Select students will be involved in a variety of subject specific and cross curricular projects, such as: a PAPA residential to Ingestre Hall, a joint Maths and History WW2 Tour in Ypres, and a Science trip to the Salter's Chemistry Festival.

After another extremely successful year, the Brilliant Club will again be running over the next few months! Students will be recruited and trained as PhD researchers where they will be producing university level assignments.

Furthermore, OSCA MAG&T are looking to strengthen our partnership with parents this academic year, to further support More Able, Gifted and Talented students. The first phase of this programme is due to launch early December, through our first Star Parental Partnership Meeting. An introduction to the Russell Group Universities, alongside a series of target setting activities will also take place to ensure students are stretched and challenged in every aspect of their secondary life – both in and outside of the Academy.



## Transition

November 11th saw the return of the Community Cohesion project that pairs Tividale Community Primary school, OSCA and a variety of local artisans together. The programme began in the final half-term of summer last academic year. Once again, 60 year 6 students from Tividale Community Primary and 40 of our year 7 and 8 students are working in a selection of activities ranging from cooking to performing, music and art groups etc. The programme is set to run as part of the OSCA Friday provision for the remainder of the year and strengthens the already strong transition programme in place at OSCA.

## Rewards and Aspirations

Nearly 600 students have been invited to attend OSCA's annual Ice Skating Rewards Trip. The trip is to the Telford ice rink, December 2nd. The criteria that must be met in order to be invited reflects the high expectations of the academy: an attendance score of 98% or higher must be maintained; no more than 5 late marks; less than 5 behaviour points; no time spent in the reflection room; and any borrowed uniform returned.

## Learning for Success

Friday November the 11th, was this academic year's first L4S day. Students were split into year groups and enjoyed a day chock full of PSHE curriculum. Each year group were studying a different topic.

Year 7 students focused on safety: road safety, safety around the home, DECCA on smoking and health related issues as well as some basic first aid.

Year 8s followed the Sandwell Nurses programme, looking at and discussing issues related to exploitation, relationships, body image, and risk taking.

Year 9s studied the Sandwell Women's Aid programme, learning about and discussing issues revolving around: gangs, sexual bullying, staying in control, and readiness for sex.

Year 10 students were split by House and by gender to allow for comfort and ease whilst studying and discussing sex education.

Whilst the year 11 students looked at getting career ready with: a career fair, mock interviews, CV writing, and a pay debate – who earns what?

Overall, the day was a massive success and the range of topics being presented allowed for a bespoke experience for all participants.





## Physical Education

As a result of student voice responses, competitive female sport is taking great strides forwards this year at OSCA. Since September, 25 girls from year 7-11 have represented OSCA in Netball. Two teams have been entered in a U14 and U16 league and both teams have consistently demonstrated a fantastic work ethic and have taken great pride in representing OSCA. With the conclusion of their season on the horizon, the team have made plans to continue – with an excursion to watch a game live!

For the first time, OSCA has competed in a U14 and U16 girls Sandwell schools badminton competition. The U14s came 4th and the U16s came joint 1st (but sadly, received 2nd place due to points scored). The U16 team will be attending the finals in November.

Student voice responses also requested a girls football club to be held at OSCA. Girls football has now been added to the OSCA Friday line-up. The club is coached by an external provider and OSCA alumni. It is proving popular and, like all of the PE clubs, provides an outlet from the curriculum provision and a pathway into the community sports structure.

The PE department has had its first of many house competitions, taking place in lessons during the week commencing the 7th of November. The competitions have marked the end of topic across the following activities: Football, Orienteering, Basketball, Trampolining, Netball, and Fitness (Multi-gym challenges). During the competition, students gained points for participating – additional points were then given by students who selected their peers in recognition of excellent leadership and achievement within each activity. Points were then given for the highest points total in each house. The final standing for these competitions were:

1st Place – Shakespeare, 81 points  
 2nd Place – Picasso, 63 points  
 3rd Place – Dahl, 61 points  
 4th Place – Da Vinci, 58 points.

The GCSE PE students have also participated in one of a two day course in Orienteering to raise attainment in the practical part of their course. They absolutely smashed through expectations and in their practice run got the best times of any group seen by the experienced instructor. The students showed resilience in the face of rain, sleet and occasional sunshine and worked hard throughout the entire day. Their assessment is set for the 24th of November.

### Football Fixture Results

The boys football season is well underway with games happening thick and fast throughout the first half-term. The results so far is as stands:

#### Yr 7s

Vs St Michaels Won 4 - 2  
 Vs Bristnall Hall Lost 7 - 2  
 Vs Forge Won 4 - 2

#### Yr 8s

Vs St Michaels Lost 2-0  
 Vs Forge Lost 3 - 1  
 Vs Perryfields Lost 11 - 2

#### Yr 9

Vs St Michaels Lost 7 - 0  
 Vs Perryfields Lost 5-0

#### Yr 10

Vs St Michaels Lost 8 - 0  
 Vs Perryfields Lost 7 - 4

#### Yr 11

Vs Oldbury College of Sport Won 6-3  
 Vs Arden school in Solihull Won 3-1  
 Vs Baxter College in Kidderminster Lost 2-0.

They made the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the National Cup and are in the quarter finals of the Sandwell Schools Cup.

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