

# PENSBY HIGH SCHOOL

## NEWSLETTER



Another term has flown by, with our last newsletter written in the depths of winter, whilst I sit now and see a host of daffodils outside the windows of my office. New growth and change lie before us and no more so than for the Year 11s, who will begin their GCSE examinations in earnest in early May. We wish them the very best of luck in their exams.

It is though heart-warming to look through the pages of this newsletter, to read and see so many of the activities that your children have engaged with, and there are some lovely photographs too. The range of opportunities and experiences, from planting trees, performing, and watching performances, chess through to an all-conquering rugby team are reflected in the newsletter; thank you to everyone who has contributed to this.

We are all, I am sure, looking forward to the break, I hope that you all receive far too much chocolate over the next two weeks and as a family have time to enjoy each other's company.

Thank you all once again for your support, have a lovely Easter.

Kevin Flanagan

### **Head of Year 7 Mrs Hardwick:**

What a fantastic second term the year 7 has had 😊

They are continuing to overcome many barriers and challenges.

Over the last 13 weeks members of the year group have achieved:

- 70% of students have accumulated only + class charts and are fortnightly put into a draw for a prize for their achievements.
- Positive postcards have continued to be sent home by form tutors for a variety of reasons
- The Brilliant Club graduated and have earned themselves certificates of achievement.
- Students who performed in the school production of Matilda were outstanding performers.
- The students in the Rugby Team extra-curricular club represented the school and won The Shield
- Students continue to represent the school football, rugby, and netball team.

Well done to all students for your excellent attitude to learning.

### **Head of Year 8 Mrs Sullivan:**

Well done to year 8 for another amazing term! There are many things to celebrate:

- The year 8 boys football team beat Maghull High School 6-0 and they are now through to the final.
- Some year 8 students were part of the Matilda performance which was magnificent. All their hard work paid off and it was fantastic to watch.
- 7 year 8 students took part in The Brilliant Club. On Monday 27th February we went to University of Liverpool for the graduation, and I was very proud of them all!
- The year 8 girls netball team are consistently attending training after school on a Thursday and making steady improvements week in, week out.
- Year 8 students came first, second and fifth in the World Book Day Book Cover Competition in the SSC. The entries from year 8 students; 15 in total were so creative and it was difficult for Mrs Roebuck to choose a top five!
- I have led three assemblies sharing lovely positive comments I have received from staff about helpfulness, lovely manners, politeness and resilience to name a few.
- 123 students in year 8 have had 95% attendance or above this term.

Well done to all year 8 students for your excellent attitude to learning this term. I look forward to a positive summer term.

### **Head of Year 9: Mr Woodward-Booth:**

As we approach the Easter holidays, it is a good time to reflect on where we are as a year group. We are now well past the halfway point of your child's time at Pensby High School. The options process has been completed and is important as it is the first-time pupils have a choice in what they wish to study. It is their first independent steps on their education journey. These choices will help to mould and stimulate their further education choices and ultimately their direction in life.

As I write, a good portion of the year group are out on a rather soggy and damp DofE expedition. Such experiences test both resilience and sense of humour. They help to develop skills in leadership, negotiation, influencing and teamwork. The worse the weather, the more they learn!

I am very pleased with the way Year 9 have conducted themselves this year and look forward to more of the same going forward.

**Head of Year 10 Mr Booth:**

Year 10 continue to do really well as they go through their GCSE year. Positive emails have been sent to 75 students so far as part of our 5 on a Friday scheme, and a glance at the year group in Class Charts shows the vast majority of students with lots and lots of positives this year, over 200 for some.

In many ways the focus of this term has been on what happens after school, with an extremely successful careers and apprenticeship fair and then work experience. Seeing the students on placement and hearing how well they are doing was an absolute delight, and since they have returned, we have received many unsolicited and glowing emails saying how mature, helpful, and hard-working they were. They were a credit to the school, their parents and themselves and should be proud of what they achieved.

On a personal note, I need to say goodbye. I am unable to continue in my post and will not be returning after the Easter holiday. I spoke to the students in assembly and told them how proud I have been to be their head of year; how sad I am to be leaving and how much I have enjoyed my time with them. I would like to say the same to all the parents I have helped or annoyed during my time here – the very best of luck in the future to you and your families.

**Head of Year 11 Mrs O'Hare:**

Another very busy term at Pensby, year 11 continue to make me proud, they really are a lovely year group. Their attitude and behaviour in the recent mock exams was excellent and their commitment to period 6 is commendable. Many of them have already made major steps towards their post-16 options having applied for college places, others for apprenticeships. At our recent careers fair, attended by industry and service experts, year 11 were inquisitive and articulate. Many of the business professionals commented on how polite and mature they are.

Summer term is around the corner and will of course bring the challenge of the main event, GCSEs, but we will also have the opportunity to have some good times along the way. Keep going year 11!

## English Department

Year 7 have been studying poetry and non-fiction this term; some of our pupils entered poetry competitions so we wait to see if they have been successful.

Year 8 have had a term of literature; firstly, they studied Charles Dickens and why the context is so important for a text, then our poet laureate was studied in detail.

Both Year 7 and 8 got to watch a Romeo and Juliet performance:



Year 9 have been learning about non-fiction writing followed by Much Ado About Nothing.

Year 10 and 11 have been studying for their GCSEs following both the language and literature syllabi - so they have been working and revising hard.

Year 11 enjoyed a performance of An Inspector Calls followed by a question-and-answer session to enhance their understanding of the play:



As part of their revision, Year 11 watched a performance of Macbeth. The Manchester Actors Company compressed the play into 1 hour, giving our pupils extra insight to the key scenes. The performers complimented the pupils on their attentiveness and interaction with the play:



Period 6 for year 11 focused on literature last half term; back to language this term - please make sure that pupils who have been invited attend.

## Maths Department

In February we had year 9 and 10 set 1 do the Intermediate UKMT Mathematics Challenge. This is a difficult challenge that is made to make students think and problem solve. Well done to the following students who received certificates:

Year 9 – Bronze – Frederic and Seth. Silver – Connor

Year 10 – Bronze – James, Kios, and Mason. Silver – Rupert, Lewis, and Leo  
Gold – Sam. Sam was in the top 10% in the country. He went on to do a follow-on round, we are awaiting these results.

We have also been doing challenges each month. In February, the challenge was to produce, or find, the best Maths joke. Our winners were:

Lizzie 9KSA - Surgeon: Nurse, I have so many patients, who do I treat first?  
Nurse: Easy, follow the order of operations

Dylan 9KSA - What do you call numbers on the move?  
Roaming numerals

Oscar 9JBE and Charlie 9KSA - Why are cows so good at times tables?  
Because the practice Mooootiplication

Lillian 7EST – (2 good jokes) Why did the obtuse angle go to the beach?  
Because it was over 90 degrees  
What do you call an empty parrot cage?  
A Polygon

A special mention for Mr Booth and Miss McCluskey for their jokes:

Mr Booth - There are 10 kinds of people:  
Those who understand binary and those who don't.

Miss McCluskey - What do you get if you divide the circumference of a jack-o-lantern by its diameter?  
Pumpkin Pi

In March we ran a competition for Pi Day. Students had to memorise as many digits of  $\pi$  as they could. The winners were as follows:

Year 7 - Allyssa-Rose 7TMA on 74 decimal places

Year 8 - Lucas 8STE on 77 decimal places

Year 9 - Lucy 9EDU on 36 decimal places

Well done to all students who joined in. Well done to the winners and everyone who took part!

## Music and Drama Department

### Matilda

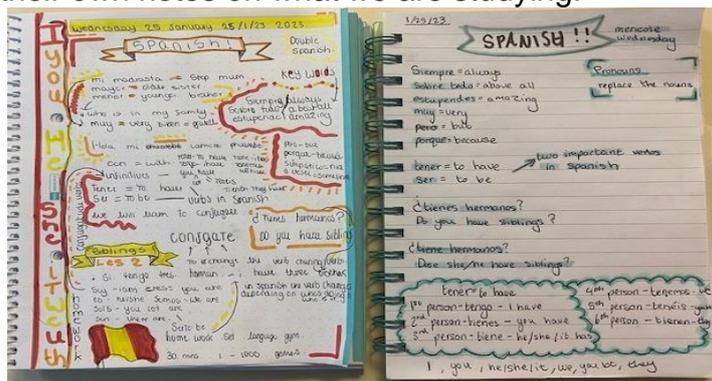
Our school production Matilda Jr the Musical performed on the 15th and 16th February was a triumph! Congratulations to all the students involved: from the talented cast members and brilliant stage and tech crew. Not forgetting the shining members of staff who helped to bring the show together. Students were applauded for their high standard performance and theatre professionalism. A truly wonderful cast to work with - Well done all!

Miss R Hazlehurst (director)



## Spanish Department

In Spanish, two Year 7 students, Phoebe, and Isabella F, went above and beyond by doing all their work in the lesson plus their own notes on what we are studying.



Year 7 Spanish students completed a cultural poster on a typical festival in Spain. Most chose the 'Tomatina' which is a tomato fight which takes place in a village called Buñol, Valencia. They also had a fun lesson completing final revision for their upcoming assessment practising 'me gusta' and other opinions by creating a series of flashcards and quizzes. ¡Fenomenal!



Latazia, Neve, and Ben received Classchart points for good, quality homework at the end of this unit.



### **Spanish Speaking Club – Wednesday lunchtimes**

We have had a committed band of year 11 students coming every week during year 11 and some of them came during year 10 too. Students bring their lunch, and we practise talking about different topics from within the GCSE curriculum to help students become more confident and fluent in describing their opinions about topics such as where they live, their family, holidays, hobbies, school, technology and future plans for university and jobs. This has made such a difference to those students who have attended, and they have all scored highly on their mock speaking exams, whether they are doing the Foundation tier or the Higher tier. This club is open to all students currently studying GCSE Spanish and it is a great way to improve your confidence in speaking.

## Science Department

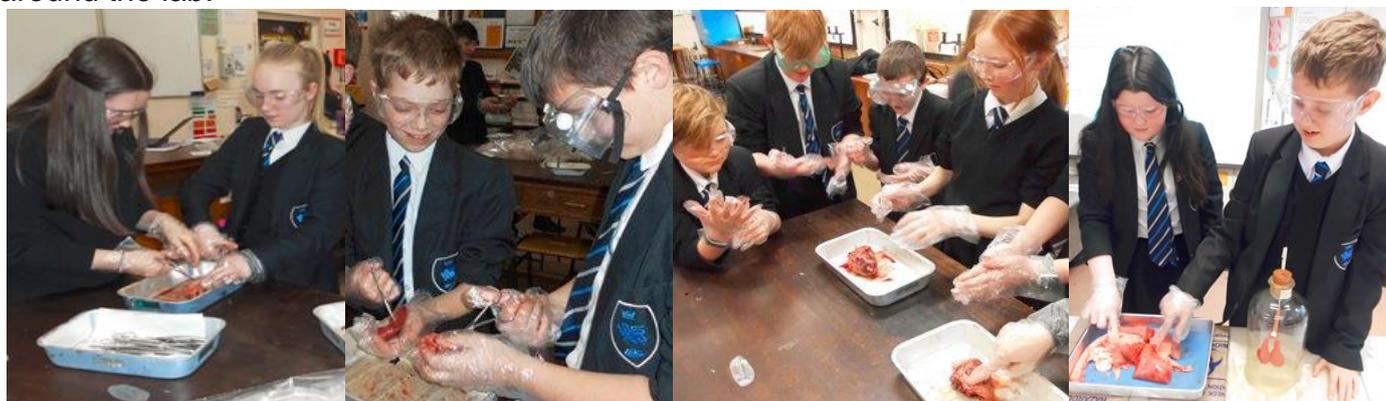
We've had a busy time in science this term with Science Club, Crest Award Club, a Year 9 trip and, of course, National Science Week activities.

Science Club has been really popular, Mr Marris and Mr Thompson consistently have a large group of Year 7's coming. A highlight this term was investigating the types of bacteria living on different surfaces around the lab by swabbing with cotton buds and growing cultures on agar plates. Students have also designed and tested parachutes, created an exothermic reaction to make handwarmers, and are now working on designing and building LEGO bridges.



During the first week back after Christmas a group of eager scientists in Year 9 visited the Faculty of Science and Engineering at the University of Liverpool where they were able to carry out experiments in state-of-the-art laboratories with the support of PHD students. It was a great way for them to see how the experiments we do at school are built on to solve real-life problems.

More recently during National Science Week, there were lots of STEM activities going on. A surprising number of students were (worryingly) keen to dissect eyeballs and hearts one lunchtime, whilst others were busy building catapults that were used to fling mini marshmallows around the lab.



The chemistry department did us proud with their amazing explosions and the year 7 & 8 science quiz final was quite competitive this year.



Finally, well done to all of you who solved some of the science puzzles posted on Instagram each day – you're a clever bunch!

## Humanities Department

### History

**Year 7** students have been working hard on their new topic of 'who was the most successful medieval monarch globally', and looking at the richest ruler that ever lived, Mansa Musa. They have also compared rulers like Genghis Khan with King John and Eleanor of Aquitaine, working out what makes a successful leader.

**Year 8** have been enjoying their work on the suffragettes and the suffragists and looking at the difference between them once they finished their work on World War One.

**Year 9** have been exploring the social revolution in the 1960s and we have loved sharing our musical knowledge and sounds through the musical counterculture of this time period, including the work of Bob Dylan and how he used his music and lyrics to show society's wrong doings and the need for change.

**Year 10** are starting their paper 3 topic of Weimar and Nazi Germany having completed paper 2 Elizabeth I.

**Year 11** are in revision mode, revising paper 2 Superpowers and the Cold War and practising exam questions. We wish them all the very best of luck in their external exams in the summer.

### Hard Boiled Humanities Easter Egg Competition Winners:



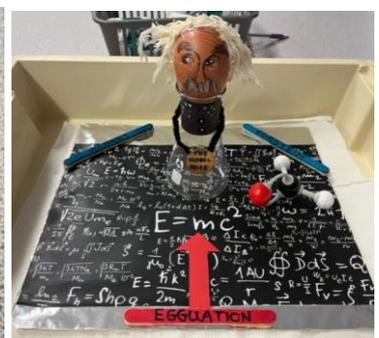
Faie Year 7 - The Titanic



Kyra Year 8 - Tutankhamun



Abigail Year 9  
- Marilyn Monroe



Science lab technicians  
- Albert Eggstein

## PE Department

Another busy and successful few weeks in the world of PE. A change in topics allowed some pupils to undertake the new Outdoor Activities and Gymnastics unit for the first time.

Tennis club has also started again every Wednesday after school and is becoming very popular. The club is run by tennis coach Owen Kirkam from Heswall Lawn Tennis Club.

As always, we had many fixtures taking place. Our Year 7 rugby team, the Pensby Lions who are coached by an RFU rugby coach, Chris Ramsden also had a successful term by winning the Wirral Rigby plate competition.



Our Year 8 football team beat Maghull to reach the Merseyside Cup Final (venue and date to be confirmed).



Our Year 9 football team got to the Wirral Cup quarter finals but unfortunately were beaten by Woodchurch High school. Well done to everyone involved!

The Year 10 football team are very excited to be through to the semi-final of the Wirral Cup after winning the quarter final!

After the Easter break, we will be moving to our summer sports which include Rounders, Cricket, and Athletics.

## Art Department

**Year 7** have been studying colour theory, abstract art and looking at the work of Wassily Kandinsky. They started by listening to music and responding to it with colour and mark making then made circle paintings in the style of Kandinsky. They have just started to use their knowledge of colour theory to work on local landscapes inspired by Claude Monet.



### **Year 8**

On World Book Day year 8 were lucky enough to have 'The Art Doctor' come into school and run an anime and manga workshop!



**Year 9** have been learning about portraiture and they have produced their own self-portraits with backgrounds inspired by various natural forms artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Ernst Haeckel. They have also painted abstract expressionist studies of famous celebrities.





**Year 10** have looked at local architecture this term and have produced some exciting mixed media colour compositions incorporating the work of Jason Borbay, Ian Murphy, and John Piper.



### Year 11

In January, year 11 students visited Liverpool Walker art gallery to view the “art of the terraces” football exhibition and also a general visit to the rest of the work in the Gallery. They then went on to visit the Turner prize exhibition and JMW Turner exhibition at the Tate Liverpool in the Albert Dock. On the way back, we stopped off at the Williamson Art Gallery in Birkenhead to see the Michael Brennan Wood exhibition, Katherine Kowal Post and “abstraction” exhibitions. Pupils were doing research for their final art exam and this will enable pupils to study works of art first hand which will inform their contextual studies in both coursework and externally set assignments in the Spring term.





## Ethics Department



Year 7 have been studying the life of Mohammed, and understanding why Ramadan is such an important month for Muslims.

**Ramadan began on the Evening of Wednesday March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and ends on the Evening of Friday April 21<sup>st</sup>**

Congratulations to all our students taking part this year!!  
Here are some reflections from a few Pensby Islamic scholars:

**Abdelrahman**  
 Ramadan is the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar year. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. There is also a verse in the Qur'an that prescribes fasting of all Muslims who are mature and healthy enough to do so for the whole day.  
 Fasting is when you don't eat or drink from dawn to sunset. Fasting is also seen as a way to learn patience and break bad habits. It's an act of worship, a chance to get closer to God, and a way to become more compassionate to those in need.

**Eleanor**

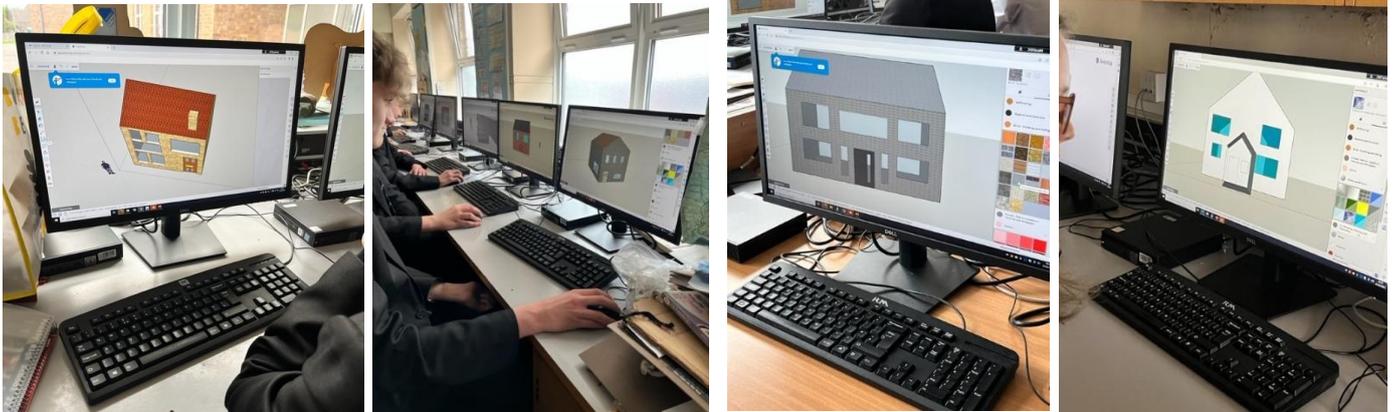
<p><b>Why is Ramadan important to Muslims?</b></p> <p>Fasting is important during Ramadan as Muslims believe it allows them to devote themselves to their faith and come closer to Allah.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Who started it?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mohammed started it because he wanted others to feel how poor people feel. He wanted it to be a test for people. Some people find it a hard challenge. It is meant to be a time of spiritual discipline – of deep contemplation with God. Extra prayer, increased charity and generosity, and intense study of the Qur'an.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The reward for fasting is immense!</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">It is a time where Muslims seek forgiveness, in the hope of rewards of heaven from the mercy of Allah. Seeking forgiveness from Allah to pardon a believer's sins is among the rewarding acts of worship        Muslims are urged to observe day and night.</p>
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**India**  
 Ramadan is the holiest month for Muslims, they do a special tradition called fasting which means they don't eat in the day, only before sunrise and sunset. They do this to experiment how poor people feel. They get to read they Qur'an daily by reading it they learn more about their religion. Each year Ramadan starts on a different day. Around 1.6 billion people in the world are Muslims!

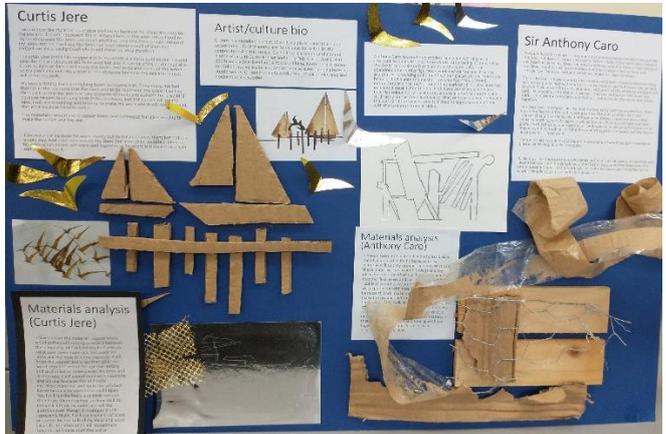
And to Year 11's – such a pleasure to teach. Best of luck to you all as you prepare for your final furlong of revision for your GCSE's. Keep up the good work and believe in yourselves!

## Design and Technology Department

This term Year 9 have continued to learn commercial CAD programme that are widely used in industry. Students have followed tutorials to design and make an architectural house using google SketchUp. Students loved this programme and really got into designing their own concepts!



Year 11 Exam pieces:



## SEND Department

Students spending quiet time in the Student Support Centre during lunchtime.



### Maths Intervention

This term students have been working hard in the SSC where they receive tailored intervention on the Complete Maths Tutor platform. Students receive support with any topic from numeracy skills to trigonometry, depending on their needs. These students are on their way to becoming fantastic mathematicians. Well done!



### New Phonics Programme started September 2023

This programme provides intensive, targeted support to address specific gaps in a student's reading. This is delivered three sessions per week. It teaches each student at their challenge point to accelerate progress. Throughout the programme the student is taught sets of speed sounds with simple mnemonics to help them read and write the letter-sound correspondence quickly. Students to be assessed every half term so they are always learning at their challenge point.

The 27 students on this programme are gaining in confidence with some students reading/spelling ages increasing by as much as 12 months during the first 3 months of this intervention.

### SSC Competition

For World Book Day students had to design a book cover:



## The Library

### Quiz Team

On 21st March, our quiz team took part in the regional heat (Merseyside and Manchester online) of the National Literacy Trust's, National Reading Champions Quiz 2023, and we won! We're off to London in June for the final!



**New computers!** The library has 10 new computers ready to use for homework, research, and revision. During quieter times students can also play chess online and complete educational puzzles such as Wordle.



### Pensby Pundits

After two more successful pitches to The Reading Agency, our book club received free copies of 'The Marvellers' and 'Influential' to read and review for Picadilly Press and Faber Children's Books!



## Carnegie Shadowing

*“The Yoto Carnegies are the UK’s longest running and best-loved children’s book awards, recognising outstanding reading experiences created through writing and illustration in books for children and young people. The Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing is awarded by children’s librarians for an outstanding book written in English for children and young people.”*

Every year CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) invites students to take part by becoming ‘shadowers,’ as they ‘shadow’ the judging process for the Carnegie Medals; they read, discuss, and review the books on each shortlist, engage in reading related activity which they can share online, and vote for their favourites to win the Shadowers’ Choice Awards. Pensby Pundits and other students like to take part in this challenge and enjoy the right to vote for their favourite. Here is this year’s shortlist and one of the live author talks we’ve seen:



## Manga

The interest in Manga in all year groups continues to grow and so we have added two more box sets to keep students reading! Manga originates from Japan and is a form of storytelling using art and words. It has many genres ranging from adventure and romance to horror, science fiction and even Shakespeare! Manga is appealing and captivating and can be used to engage reluctant readers because of the combination of text and pictures. The reader must follow a storyline and plot, engage with, and understand characters and their point of views. Manga can also help bridge the gap between graphic novels and traditional texts.



In Manga Club we have been playing a new board game as well as drawing and watching anime!



**World Book Day** was created by UNESCO on 23rd April 1995 as a worldwide celebration of books, and here at Pensby we have the same aim as them – to promote and encourage reading for pleasure. We want to show and make sure that reading is fun, relevant, accessible, exciting, and can help you in school and beyond.



Members of staff dressed up as book characters!

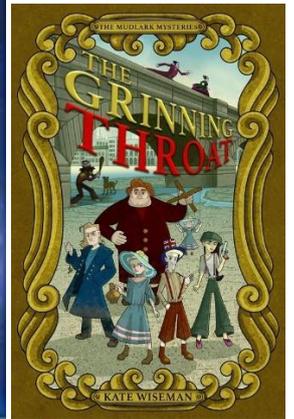
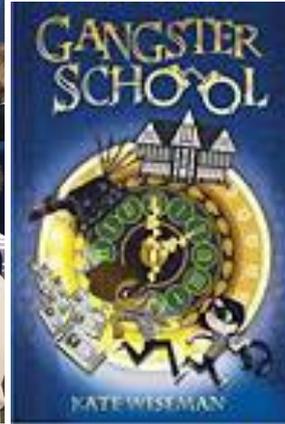
### **Gina Blaxill**

For World Book Day, Year 9 had a virtual visit with author Gina Blaxill who has written two twisted fairy tales and gripping YA (young adult) novels. Her talk was interesting, fun and relevant for our students. The students particularly enjoyed participating in an activity in which they helped Gina choose characters, genre, and a setting for a pretend new book (they came up an evil Goldilocks running riot in Morrison's)!



## Kate Wiseman

Year 7 had a great virtual visit with Kate Wiseman on World Book Day. Kate explained about her fun 'Gangsta School' books and about her new book series coming out in July, that involves mudlarking. Students answered and asked lots of great questions, and Kate set them two challenges - to go away and write a book review for their favourite book or invent a new character that could feature in one of her books. We sent Kate our entries and she chose the winners and very generously sent lots of books, stickers, and badges as prizes!



**British Science Week:** Working with the science department we ran a competition and a display of all our STEM books (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) in the library. Year 7 also watched a virtual author event run by the BookTrust featuring British Scientist Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock. This was also tied in with our celebration of International Women's Day as Dr Aderin-Pocock, who is best known for presenting BBC1s The Sky At Night, has been made into a 'Barbie Role Model' in recognition of her achievements in making space and science more accessible to girls!







## Clubs

### **Chess Club:**

Chess club is growing. We are regularly at capacity so make sure you get here at the beginning of lunchtime to secure a spot! Do you think you can checkmate the teacher? Corbyn and Josh have both managed it already. Join us on Friday at lunch if you want to have a go.



### **Media Club:**

In media club we have enjoyed watching a range of films and TV shows and discussed media language such as camera angles, use of sound and special effects.

We have tried to link the choice of film/TV show to the time of the year, so we watched Hocus Pocus (the original!) at Halloween and The Grinch at Christmas.

### **History Fiction and Film Club:**

The History club have continued to attend every Wednesday. They have spent the majority of this term enjoying a selection of Horrible Histories episodes and sharing their knowledge on the events covered in the show.

The students will also be involved in judging the 'Good or bad egg' historical figure just before the Easter break.

## The Brilliant Club

This term our "Scholars Programme" students attended their Graduation Ceremony at the University of Liverpool. Last term six Year 7, and seven Year 8 students completed a programme on Disease Detectives, where they researched the spread and impact of infectious diseases.

Students worked with a PHD researcher on the university style module based on the researcher's world-leading expertise. The programme was pitched at a Key Stage above where students are currently studying. It has developed students written and verbal communication, critical thinking, and metacognition skills, through following this supra-curricular content. They were graded on their work in a university style assessment, both Callum Macrae and Sam Davies achieved a 1st Class result.

This programme is designed to support students to develop skills and knowledge to help them make ambitious and successful applications to universities, should that be what they decide they want to do. At the same time, students have developed great academic skills to support their schoolwork day to day.



## Smart School Council



In September we launched the Smart School Council. This is a different way of doing school council than in the past with more emphasis on student leadership and student voice. Each form chose a representative at the start of the year, and we meet on a more regular basis than in the past with the student council members being keen to give their time to bring their ideas and those of their forms for discussion.

The main group of students are called the Communication Team and members of the team have been proactive this year in planning and running a week of assemblies to introduce themselves to the rest of the school; they have also been asked to support Mr Flanagan and his team by asking questions during an interview process for a new member of staff as well as having a meeting with the Ofsted inspector to answer questions about their views on the school.

Our older and more experienced students have been proactive in helping the younger ones learn the ropes and all the adults who have met our student council have been very impressed by their maturity, understanding of the topics under discussion and their enthusiasm for making our school the best it can be.

One of the benefits of this way of running the student council is that all students in school can be part of an Action Team. These are made up of students who have a particular focus and ask a member of staff to support them in running their group. Currently we have the Eco Action Team, the Charities Action Team, and the SEND Action Team. We hope to have a Pride Action Team very soon which will aim to support diversity in school.

We plan to keep developing the role of the student council to give students opportunities to grow their leadership and communication skills.

Mrs Teare

## The Eco-Action Team

The team have had a busy term, they led assemblies to inform the whole school about the need for trees in urban areas and then they helped to plant 838 trees around our school site! They have also been monitoring traffic outside school during drop-off time and will continue this over the next couple of months, after sending a survey to parents to encourage walking/ cycling/ scootering to school!



Eco-action team members and students who have opted for Design Technology, took part in a flower-making workshop, and made paper dandelions. These flowers will be included in an art installation! The art installation is being created using paper wildflowers to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wirral Country Park. This will be placed in Wirral Country Park visitor centre for the month of June, then Birkenhead Park visitor centre for two weeks and then the Lady Lever Art Gallery (it is portable and will be moved around).

## Careers

This term Years 9-11 had the chance to meet with some service and industry professionals in order to find out more about apprenticeship opportunities. Thank you to all the businesses involved for supporting our event - our students found it hugely beneficial!



Also, all years are having brilliant Police careers talks from Will Hughes:



Year 10 have been on work experience, and we have had amazing feedback about how hard they have worked, and their attitude and manners:

