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ISSUE 36

SPRING TERM 2021

Optimistic About the Future

The undoubted highlight of this term has been the return of our students; the smiles on faces as our students see their friends, the noise of energised classrooms and the return to school of our Co-curricular clubs are all welcome reminders of what schools should be. Whilst we all look forward to the prospect of our small steps back towards normality it has been uplifting for staff and students to have school back to as close to normal as we can hope at the moment.

Once again we want to express just how delighted we have been with the manner in which our students have returned to school. Their positivity, engagement and behaviour have all been simply fantastic. They have coped incredibly well with the move to LFT testing and the wearing of face masks in classrooms, once again demonstrating their remarkable resilience. We have also been delighted with the maturity shown of our students in year 11 and 13 who have quickly adapted to a new series of assessments for their GCSE and A Level grades this summer.

We very much look forward to a busy and exciting summer term and hope that our continued collective efforts to reduce and mitigate the spread of Covid-19 will help to see the continued steps back towards a less restrictive society and even further range of school activities.

Wishing you all a lovely and relaxing Easter break

Mr Warwood, Associate Headteacher

Fabulous Testing Team

We have been absolutely delighted by the attitude of our students during the testing phase following their return to school. The students acted with resilience and maturity throughout the process. 7,200 home test kits have now been delivered to students for the next phase of testing. We would like to thank all students and their families for their support in adapting to these new routines.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank our amazing testing team who have done the most fabulous job in carrying out the testing of staff and students since the programme began in January. The process would not have been so effective without their dedication and professionalism.



Arden is part of Arden Multi Academy Trust: Chief Executive Officer, Mr M Murphy and Executive Headteacher, Mr D Burgess

Arden values: Determination : Excellence : Courage : Inspiration : Friendship : Equality : Respect

House News

The Arden House system is led by Miss O'Brien and Miss Kelly and its main purpose is to produce happy, confident and competitive students who take pride in their Houses and feel they are a part of Arden.

Through the recent lockdown, the Arden House System kept students active and engaged through the game Ardenmaster! A spin on the popular television show, Taskmaster, students were assigned tasks by the 'Ardenmaster' (Mr Warwood) who recorded videos in which he issued the tasks which had been written on beautifully designed letters produced by Mr Fletcher. The students then had the option of completing each task and submitting their entries via the Arden Google Classroom. Tasks included:

- Create the longest line of objects in height order
- Decorate your window to entertain your neighbours

It was really uplifting to see the entries come flying in and congratulations to the respective winners.

Decorate your window task overall winner: Evie McGoldrick (for the dancing flamingo!)

Line of objects overall winner: Samuel Underwood

Well done to all entrants and winners who all receive House Points. You can read more about the House System [here](#).



Secretary of State Visits Arden

You may have seen that the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson visited Arden at the beginning of March. He was joined by Andrew Warren who is the Regional School Commissioner for the West Midlands and our local MP, Saqib Batti.

The visit included a tour of the school during which the Secretary of State spoke to students about their experiences of remote learning and their thoughts on the imminent full return to school. He also visited the testing centre and spoke to staff about testing, as well as the wider challenges we have faced as a school over the past year.

The Secretary of State was hugely impressed by the very high quality remote learning that he saw and heard about, the thorough risk assessments in place, well-being support and the 'gold plated' testing programme. He made a specific point of passing on his thanks to the Arden staff for all the incredible work and care they have shown throughout this most challenging pandemic. We would like to extend this to our students and families also. It has really been the biggest of team efforts.

Here are some images from the visit.



Library News

Arden Library has been very busy this term running a digital service through Google Classroom with ten Creative Writing competitions shared throughout the term and many enthusiastic students across the year groups entering. Fingers crossed we hear the results of the competitions next term and get some winners!

We also held our first Virtual Book Club where we discussed a theme each week e.g. Myths & Legends. The best part of the book club was the 'bubble popping', as students from Year 7 to 6th form could be involved at the same time. Freya Hosking in Year 7 stated, the Arden Virtual Book Club was a great way to "share a love of books with fellow bibliophiles".



World Book Day was celebrated in a unique, virtual way this year through the use of a Choose Your Own Adventure game playable via Googleforms. The story involved "You", a student, who falls asleep in detention and gets trapped in the school overnight and has to find their way out. Arden Academy is a very different place at night, with explosions, blizzards,

volcanoes, tigers and evil, scheming teachers! The failed endings were written by the student librarians and myself with only one "True Ending" where you leave school as a hero and students who found this were entered into a prize draw. Out of 309 players across the school, only 76 students discovered the One True Ending and foiled Mr Warwood's plot to hypnotise all students into obedience! The winner of the prize draw was Typhaine Jardine and a prize is on its way to you soon!

Post-lockdown, library lessons began for Years 7 and continued for Year 8. Every Year 7 was greeted with a Welcome Pack including a free World Book Day book for them to read and keep, plus a bookmark and a postcard as a welcome gift.

I've been really pleased to see the enthusiasm for reading is still as strong as ever at Arden - keep reading!



Coding Competition

Back in January, a group of Arden students competed in the finals of the Matrix Challenge 2020. This is a cyber security challenge created and organised by the Regional Organised Cyber Crime Unit (ROCU) National Network and is open to all 11-17 year olds nationwide.

The event was a great way for children and teenagers to learn more and improve upon their cyber skills.

Congratulations go to Monty B, Lucy McG, Jack B, Nihaal B, Rose T-M for getting through to the last stage of the challenge.

Students should speak to their Computing teacher if they are interested in taking part in future challenges.



A Unique Bookshop Visit!

During the first lockdown in March 2020, I took the opportunity to apply for funding from the book charity, the Siobhan Dowd Trust. I applied for £300 for a bookshop spree, which involved the student librarians (who stem from a range of backgrounds) visiting a bookshop and selecting books for the library. I envisioned the students would be able to visit a bookshop in person, as we have done in previous years, unfortunately due to government restrictions, this has not been possible so we have had to be a bit more creative.

I spoke with local bookseller Tamsin at Kenilworth Books, who agreed to give our students a virtual bookshop tour, including a Q&A with the students, and a showcase of new titles. The student librarians were put into groups for different genres, including Classics, Short Stories, Fiction and Non-Fiction and each given a budget of £50. The students researched their criteria and attended the Q&A with fabulous questions and some insightful discussions about new books and why they would be important to have on the library shelves for all students to enjoy.

We are currently finalising the order and looking forward to getting those books on the shelves.

Thank you to the Siobhan Dowd Trust for the generous grant, and thank you Kenilworth Books for your flexibility and enthusiasm.



Arden Futures: Request for Support

Arden Futures is the programme of Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG) at Arden. The programme aims to support students in preparing them for the next stage of their lives after Arden. As part of this we aim to provide students with links to as many different employers as possible. To do this we rely upon the support from our local networks.

We are looking to individuals and organisations to help provide our students, particularly our Year 10 and Year 12 students, with a 'virtual insight into the world of work'. We are asking that you, or perhaps an organisation you have contacts with, can support our students in a whole new, and virtual, way.

As you are fully aware, the last year has been extremely challenging for our students who have had to adapt to a whole new way of learning. They have missed out on many opportunities to enhance their learning, not least the opportunity to gain some insight into the world of work. Choosing a pathway is difficult at the best of times but it is so important that we focus on helping our students navigate their way through the next stages of their journey into their final career of choice.

If you, or someone you know, can offer a virtual insight into the world of work, we would be delighted if you/they would register and let us know how you can help our students with the all-important task of thinking about their futures and deciding upon their best course of action.



There are 3 ways to help:

1. **Virtual work experience** – perhaps a one-off session or series of sessions to suit the employer/student
2. **Online Q&A Session** – with a small group of supervised students
3. **Provide a short video about your work, what it entails and how you came to work in your chosen field**

We are also open to any ideas you may have yourself for supporting our students.

To register support, complete this form – <https://forms.gle/Fr6YdAZyDmuLJMz17>

For more information about Arden Futures click [here](#)

Charity Fundraising

Before we broke up for the Christmas holidays we held a charity Christmas jumper day. Due to the generosity of the students and their families we raised a total of £1393.52. The money has been donated to Solihull Mind following a student vote. Thank you to everyone who contributed. If you would like to know more about the work of Solihull Mind, please click [here](#).

Individual efforts

Year 13 student Kathryn is carrying out her own personal charity fundraising event by running a marathon. She is working hard to build her stamina and strength in the hope that she will reach her goal soon. She initially aimed to raise £150 but her total so far is £547. If you would like to know more about why Kathryn is carrying out this challenge, here is the link to her *gofundme* page: [LINK](#)

Year 7 student Ella is undertaking a charity bike ride to raise money for Birmingham Children's Hospital. Ella is aiming to cycle 50 miles over the course of two months. Currently Ella is 30.88 miles into her challenge so she is over half way and doing a great job. If you would like to read more about why Ella is doing this challenge, here is the link to her *justgiving*

page: [LINK](#). Having initially set out to raise £70, Ella has so far reached £300!

Year 8 student Saoirse has been awarded a special award in recognition of the fundraising challenge she completed last year. Saoirse and her partner undertook a sponsored capsized in their 420 dinghy during the summer. They capsized and righted their vessel numerous times during a one hour period and in doing so, managed to raise over £300 for The Primrose Hospice in Worcestershire. In awarding the prize, Commodore Bob Suggitt said 'this would be no mean feat for adults let alone two young people'!



It is always a joy to hear about the personal endeavours of our students and their work is a great reflection of the Arden Values. Well done to Kathryn, Ella, Saoirse and anyone else involved in charity work.

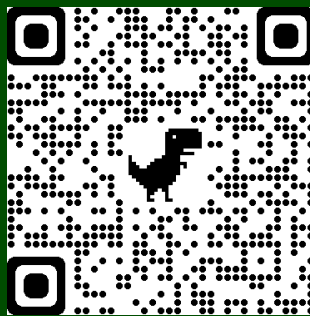


Amazing Art

Our students have continued to work incredibly hard during the remote learning period and the Art department have been absolutely delighted with the work that has been produced. Here is a little taster but please follow this [LINK](#) to see a broader selection.

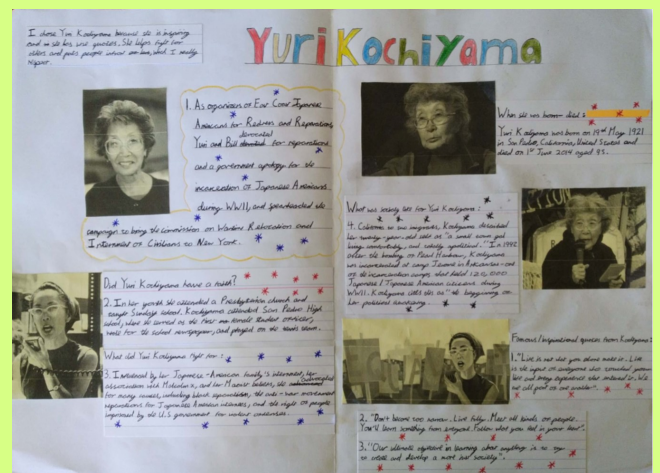
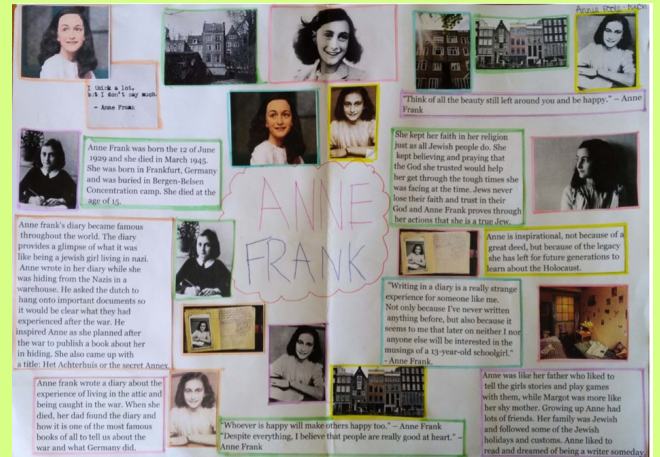


Mr Goldenfeld has been working on stop-frame animation with his Year 8s. Use the QR code below to see some examples.



Super RE Work

RE students in Year 8 were tasked to research and present information on an inspirational individual as one of their remote learning tasks. The department were really pleased with the work the students produced which showed a real depth of research and understanding. Here are some examples. You can find more by following this [link](#).



PTFA News

The response to the recent PTFA Baking and Photography competitions has certainly picked up and we are delighted with the entries – what a talented bunch you are! Paul Hollywood and Annie Leibovitz eat your heart out!! Our team of dedicated specialists (Mrs Bennett, Miss Guest, Mr Fletcher and Mr Goldenfeld) will be mulling over all the entries over the coming weeks and we will announce the winners after Easter. We don't envy them this task as the quality of baking and photography is, in our very humble opinion, outstanding.

Thank you for taking part in this PTFA organised event. We hope you - and your family - enjoyed the baking and we hope you budding photographers out there enjoyed taking a little extra time to consider composition, balance, exposure, colour and all those other technical photography things.

The PTFA wish you all a lovely Easter break.

Language Perfect

The Modern Foreign Languages department uses a platform called Education Perfect to help students in their language learning. This is an international programme in which schools compete against each other and students earn points for their school through using the platform.

The latest round of results for 2021 have just come in and show that Arden students completed a total of 78,991 questions in the latest round. This puts Arden 6th overall in the ranking of all participating schools in the United Kingdom.

This is a fantastic achievement and is a reflection of the hard work of our students during over the past few difficult months. Well done all!

Year 12 Mock Interviews

Over the last couple of weeks, all of the Year 12 students have been offered a mock interview to prepare them for university and apprenticeship interviews.

Whilst a scary prospect for most, the interviews have really focussed the students' minds on their next steps beyond Arden and we are extremely grateful to the team of external interviewers who have given up their time to provide the students with this wonderful opportunity.

Governors and friends of the school have also come together to compile a series of videos for the students to help them prepare for the challenge. This will also prove to be a really useful resource for the future.

Given the current Covid-19 restrictions, we have had to be inventive in how we were able to hold the interviews: each interview was conducted remotely via Google Meet and feedback has all been collated electronically. As a result, the students can even watch back their interview to see how well they performed and how they can improve for the real thing.

Despite the odd technical glitch, we have successfully held nearly 160 interviews.

Malcom Allsopp (one of the interviewers) reported back:

"It has been a very difficult time for them [the students] with the stop and start arrangements but all were pleased to return to classes again. I certainly enjoyed the interviews with them and they all do Arden proud. I am sure that despite the difficult times, they will all leave Arden Academy with the skills and qualities to do well in life."

We are currently collecting feedback from the students and we will also be asking the interviewers for their thoughts so that we can continue to improve the programme for next year. Below are a couple of reflections from students:

"Prior to this interview, we had to complete an application form which was not only brilliant practice for future applications, but a great starting point for conversation in the interview. In addition, a set of videos were also available to us before we completed our interviews, giving us extremely insightful and professional tips on how to maximise our potential in an interview setting. . . . Although initially, a mock interview may seem a little daunting, all the help and guidance given ensured that it was an incredibly valuable experience and one that allowed me the opportunity to explore my interests further, whilst receiving beneficial and insightful feedback." (Maria McNamarra)

"In the build up to the interview, I was so nervous as I had already struggled to fill out the Google form and thought this would affect my interview, due to not being 100% sure of what I want to do, however this didn't matter at all. The videos helped massively in getting a general understanding of what questions the interviewer may ask and how to stand out and not just give a typical response. Yet, the best advice I picked up was to just be yourself! The interviewer himself was very encouraging and interested to hear about my studies and hobbies, as well as giving me helpful advice for the future, looking at universities and thinking where do my passions most align with my skills. The whole interview process was very helpful, especially getting a feedback form afterwards." (Lottie Stiles)

Arden AIM in Maths

The Arden AIM Maths Challenge is back and better, with an online platform being used that will help make the challenge more accessible than ever!

The purpose of this challenge is to develop your problem solving skills that are useful in future scenarios, which can be utilised out of the classroom. It is aimed at students that enjoy applying their understanding of maths to more difficult problems, or those students trying to prepare for future GCSE examinations.

With the competition, prizes will be awarded at the end of the year to the best boy and girl from each years involved (7-10). To get involved please join the Google classroom code xgxm5rw or come and talk to Mr Wilson in N27 about how to get involved.

Good luck!!!


Year 7 Mathematics Club

Congratulations to the Mathematics Club Champions for the spring term Amy Banting, Noah Henbest and Freya Hosking. They along with 30 others of their year have been hard at work cracking puzzles and riddles in this year's Mathematics Club!

This is a club open to all of year 7 using the google classroom code **zlffin2**

Students are challenged to crack the clubs weekly puzzle to earn themselves Achievement points. Along the way they will learn interesting facts and watch intriguing videos (like how to tell if a number is happy or how many times would you have to fold a piece of paper to reach the moon!)

Can you solve this week's puzzle? If $1=4$, $2=16$ and $3=64$ what does $4=$?
If you know the answer join mathematics club today!


 $1 = 4$
 $2 = 16$
 $3 = 64$
 $4 = ?$

Sports News

Co-Curricular Clubs Are Finally Back!

For all the latest news about all things sports related don't forget to follow the Arden PE Department on Twitter

 @ArdenPE

One of the most frustrating things about the past 12 months has been the fact that we have been unable to run the usual co-curricular clubs in PE and many other curriculum areas. We are absolutely thrilled that these are now able to start again.

Since the students returned at the start of March we have been running Table Tennis, Running Club, Netball, Football and Cricket and have been delighted with the turnout and commitment shown by the students.

After Easter we will be changing the programme to include different activities and the timetable can be seen below. Students need to register their interest in clubs using the QR code.

Students must be in their full Arden PE kit to participate and we would like to see as many students as possible getting involved.



MONDAY	YEAR 8
TUESDAY	YEAR 7
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	YEAR 10/11
FRIDAY	YEAR 9

MORNING CLUBS (7.45-8.30AM)	BASKETBALL RUNNING CLUB
AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS (3.30-4.30PM)	ROUNDERS ATHLETICS NET/WALL GAMES



Staff News

Congratulations go to two members of the English department who welcomed babies into their families this term. Miss Ladkin's new arrival is a baby boy and Mrs Reddish's is a baby girl. Mrs Reddish and Miss Ladkin will now be on maternity leave.

This term we have also been very pleased to welcome back Mrs Dunbar and Mrs Anton from their maternity leaves. Mrs Johnson will also be returning to the MFL department after Easter. We wish them well in their return to school. After Easter we will also be welcoming Ms Graham to the English department.

We have also said goodbye to a few members of the team this term. Miss Avill, Learning Support Assistant, left to take up a

new role and Mr Ball, Teacher of Maths will be leaving us at Easter. All the best to them in their new endeavours.

Mrs Baker, Facilities Officer left Arden earlier this term. Over the years she has carried out a range of roles and we are very grateful for all she has done during her time here.

Mrs Scott, Assistant Director of Learning Support left us after 20 years. Her contribution to the Learning Support department has been incredible over the years and her care for our students has been second to none. She will be sorely missed.

After Easter we will also bid farewell to one of our longest-standing members of staff. Mrs Allen, Science Technician, joined Arden in 1999. She has been a thoroughly committed and integral part of the Science team in that time and we all wish her very well in her retirement.