



# SPOTLIGHT

Autumn newsletter | October 2019



National  
Teaching  
School



## Welcome back,

I hope that you are all feeling refreshed after a fantastic summer break and are ready to tackle the year ahead!

As we leave behind another school year, I am pleased to announce yet another set of fantastic GCSE results - this is testament to the tremendous efforts of both staff and students throughout all five years at the Academy. I am so proud and wish them all the very best for their futures.

I would like to welcome our new Year 7 students - I trust you have just about got to grips with finding your way around school. I know our friendly buddies will have been making sure you are settling in well.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to mention *Insight* - a useful tool for both parents and students on key information such as homework deadlines, assessments, behaviour and more which can be accessed via our school website.

Finally, you can keep up to date with all the goings on around school by following our social media channels. Have a lovely half term!

*Alex Hook*

**Miss Alex Hook**  
Head of School



## We achieved our best ever GCSE results!

**This summer, Year 11 students celebrated a fantastic set of GCSE results and the best attainment score our school has ever seen!**

In the second year of more challenging GCSEs across the curriculum, students excelled in all subject areas with not only excellent grades, but by making excellent progress from their starting points, a key measure of success for all schools.

74% of students achieved a pass in both English and maths with an impressive 49% of these grades a strong pass living up to our school's excellent academic reputation.

*(Continued overleaf)*



## Perfectly impossible

Today's society seems obsessed with the idea of 'perfection' and being 'insta-perfect' - but let's be reasonable, who can live up to the expectation of being perfect all the time? If we are honest, no one can!

The dictionary definition of perfect is: 'To be completely free from faults or defects'. Completely free? Really? We all have faults and flaws, that's what makes us human. We should all be proud of these flaws as they are what makes us, us!

Let's look at an example we have all heard of recently: Little Mix's Jesy Nelson's TV show: Odd One Out. The documentary focusses on Jesy's experience of online abuse and how she was affected by cyberbullying and the pressures of not feeling 'perfect'. Instead of being proud of who Jesy is, she feels that she is not up to everyone's standards and has admitted to posting photos on social media for the approval of strangers.

Most of us use social media every day, constantly comparing ourselves to others, looking at snapshots of people's 'perfect' lives and maybe even wondering why ours aren't as 'perfect'. The truth is just that - a snapshot of someone's life does not tell the full story. We do not know what is really going on behind a camera, we don't know what people are going through, so be kind and do not compare.

A perfect world may not exist, but cancelling the idea of perfection would certainly be an exceptional start.

By Kirsty Geldard and Elise Hudson

## Dates for your diary!

- 25 Oct** Break up for half term
  - 4 Nov** Back to school
  - 29 Nov** Inset day (school closed)
  - 20 Dec** Break up for Christmas
  - 6 Jan** Back to school
  - 14 Feb** Spring half term
  - 24 Feb** Back to school
- To keep up to date with all news and events please visit:  
[www.shottonhallacademy.co.uk](http://www.shottonhallacademy.co.uk)

## GCSE results

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Attainment 8, which measures students' average grade across eight subjects, was 53.3, very significantly above the national average.

Top performer was Nicole Blackwell with a bonanza of top grades. Her nine Grade 9s, the very top grade attributed to just a tiny percentage of passes, is one of, if not the, best set of results Shotton Hall has ever seen.

Achieving a terrific seven Grade 9s, was Charlie Horn.

Emily Dobson also did exceptionally well achieving six Grade 9s. Emily had been in and out of hospital in the lead up to the GCSEs and sat all her exams with a full back brace.

Alex Hook, our Head of School, said:

"One of the marks of an outstanding school is the ability to sustain excellence for pupils year on year. Every year we encourage our students to do their best and every year they deliver. They are a wonderful group of young people who have done their teachers proud and who continue the Shotton Hall custom of being one of the top performing secondary schools in the country.

"In total, 83 Grade 9s were awarded across the school - an impressive haul for our very capable young people - who now go on to their chosen sixth forms and colleges. We wish them all the very best of luck for their future endeavours!"



## NELT charity pub quiz raises £780 for the NSPCC!

On Friday 4 October, staff from the Academy, along with other schools from the North East Learning Trust, came together for a night of pub quiz fun - in a bid to raise money for the NSPCC!

The successful night involved a classic pub quiz, disco bingo ...and of course, low key school competition! Staff with their friends and families raised an impressive £780 for a fantastic cause.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event, donated prizes, helped out on the night and bought raffle tickets - your generosity has been overwhelming!

## We're on Twitter and Facebook!



@shottonhall



facebook.com/shottonhallacademy



## Selfless students donate their hair to charity!

Well done to two of our kind-hearted students who recently donated their hair to charity.

Year 8's Hayden Rutter Bryson got the chop this half term in aid of The Leukaemia and Lymphoma Society Charity.

Hayden's hair was transformed and he is now unrecognisable. Hayden did this in support of a family friend, 6-year-old Daisy, who is suffering with effects from the disease. He raised £140 for the charity!

Year 10 student, Hope Atherton (pictured above), donated a

whopping 27 inches of hair to The Little Princess Trust last term. The sizable amount of hair will be made into wigs for children who have lost their hair due to illness.

Hope recently received a Young Heroes Award from the Peterlee Police for her generosity.

We are very proud of both our students for their incredible acts of kindness!



## Huge turnout for our open evening!

On Thursday 12 September, we opened our doors to excited families of Year 5 and 6 pupils who were trying to make a BIG decision: what school do they want to go to next year?

Our special visitors explored our building, with the help of our student buddies, and took part in lots of exciting activities such as science experiments, candyfloss making, table tennis and more!

Our current students entertained our VIPs with

singing, cheerleading and drama performances around the school.

We were pleased to see so many smiling faces and we look forward to seeing you next year!



## Students celebrate National Poetry Day

Here in the English department, we love an opportunity to celebrate poetry, so what better occasion than National Poetry Day?

We marked the event with Year 7 and 8 students constructing a 'poet-tree', where students created leaves featuring their favourite poetry quotations - some students even created their own!

The fun continued for our Year 9 'poetry-off' where students battled to be crowned the 'Kings of Kings' of Ozymandias, through quizzes and recitals.

A massive well done to 9H3 and 9S1 who emerged victorious!



## Spelling Bee W-I-N

The Academy at Shotton Hall went head to head with Wellfield and other schools in the area for the title of Spelling Bee Champions 2019.

Miss Farrell prepared the troops for what was bound to be a great battle of the spellers! Four Year 9 students were selected to represent the school and Miss Farrell was hugely confident that those selected would not let her down and she was right! Our students left Wellfield victorious with their new title in hand - congratulations to all involved!

Here's ten tough spellings to start practicing for next year: soldier, mirage, definitely, remember, embarrass, luxurious, sarcastic, stomach, oxygen, psychopath.



## Bob Anderson receives the British Empire Medal

We would like to say a huge congratulations to Bob Anderson who was presented with the British Empire Medal for his voluntary services to sport here at The Academy at Shotton Hall.

Bob runs the Peterlee Martial Arts Club and has done so, voluntarily, since 1984. The club is held here at the Academy twice a week and has seen many people reach black belt level thanks to Bob's training.

Bob was secretly nominated for the medal by a student of the karate class and an ex-colleague. He appeared in the Queen's Birthday Honours List earlier this year before being awarded the medal last night by Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Sue Snowdon, in front of a crowd of students, ex-colleagues and his adoring friends and family.

Not only has Bob been involved in martial arts but he also founded the Peterlee Celtic Football Club which progressed into the Senior League and joined Peterlee and District Sunday League, all while running his own engraving business. In 2012, Bob added to his list of achievements when he ran through Peterlee with the Olympic torch after being nominated for all his hard work.

Congratulations Bob from everyone at The Academy at Shotton Hall!



## Apollo Pavillion turns 50!

Being part of the local community is something that we here at the Academy are proud of. So when the chance to get involved with the celebrations surrounding the Pavillion turned up, we jumped at the opportunity!

Students have been extremely lucky to work with Theresa Easton, a local artist, to create a zine! Don't know what a zine is? Well, we've got you covered! A zine is a mini magazine which is entirely self-published using DIY craft techniques.

copies being distributed across East Durham.

This has been a brilliant experience for our students, allowing them to have their work featured in the press for the first time.

Thank you to Theresa for letting us get involved!

Together with Theresa, in honour of the Pavillion's 50th birthday, students have created some amazing artwork using printing press techniques. The zines will be made into a collective edition with over 5,000



## Pet's corner - meet Alfie.

This month, Spotlight would like to introduce you to Miss Fearon's pride and joy - her chihuahua, Alfie.

Aflie, also known as Alfie Bo, was born on 1 March 2014, with only three toes on his front paw! Miss Fearon says Aflie has 'little dog syndrome' - he is feisty and stands his ground with bigger dogs.

He loves going for long walks along the beach, especially in summer and his favourite toy is Lady from Lady and the Tramp.

Despite having many comfortable options, Alfie has never slept in his own bed... which Miss Fearon secretly likes!

Aflie's favourite food is a toss up between beef and chicken - spoilt pooch alert!



## Teachers complete the Great North Run

The Great North Run is one of the most iconic half marathons in the world and this year, three of our fantastic teachers completed it!

Starting in Newcastle, the 13.1 mile route takes runners through the city centre towards the River Tyne where thousands of competitors cross over the Tyne Bridge.

The route was lined by thousands of cheering supporters who were getting louder as the runners made their way down the final stretch towards the finish line.

This is an extremely challenging event and we would like to say a huge congratulations to Mrs Scott, Mr Harrison and also to Mr Wood who has taken part and completed the race for the last 18 years!

Well done to you all!

## Student speaks up for deaf awareness!

Did you know that 1 in 6 people in the UK are affected by hearing loss which mostly goes unrecognised? Our brave Year 11 student, Emma Brown, shares her story...

"Since birth I have always struggled with hearing loss. I have had many sets of grommets and operations on my ears but nothing has quite seemed to work. Little did I know that my hearing loss was part of something bigger - I had to go to A&E just before Christmas last year and found out that I had a dysfunctional Eustachian tube which was mainly to blame for my hearing loss.

"I was offered hearing aids but my first reaction was to turn them down due to the idea that I may be bullied or laughed at for having plastic things in my ears. Instead, I chose to have an operation which was unsuccessful and caused me more pain than ever. A year later I was again given the

chance to have hearing aids and thankfully I said YES - I've never looked back since. Having hearing aids is one of the best things that's ever happened to me. I heard things for the first time, things I didn't even know had a sound.

"What I have learned is that it isn't my ears or hearing aids that define me. Being deaf is something to be proud of just like anything else. It has its perks - when someone gets on my nerves I can just turn my hearing aid off... Due to my hearing loss I decided to teach myself sign language and I'm able to share that with friends and family and use it at school, showing that a disability does not define you or stop you!"

## FILM REVIEW Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse

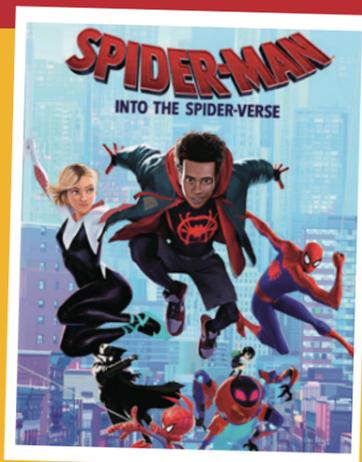
It came as a shock to me how good the animated movie was! I can say without a doubt in my mind that the story is great, the characters are amazing and the animation is absolutely groundbreaking!

It was a huge relief to have a good Spiderman movie created. The animation style of 'Into the Spider-Verse' is incredibly unique because they eliminated motion blur from the movement. The characters and backgrounds are drawn in half-tones which gives the drawing style a unique feel and makes every frame look like a comic book panel.

In addition, the characters are all endearing; the movie does not feel crowded by the amount of characters; the jokes are all funny and Nicholas Cage was the perfect choice for Spiderman!

Give it a watch - you won't regret it!

By Mio Shinohara



## Golf pros in the making

**Students from the Academy are due to have golf lessons from professional golfer James Wallace.**

Through a partnership between the Academy and Castle Eden Golf Club, the lessons will give students the opportunity to take part in a sport that is not widely played by their age group - for many students this is their first experience on a golf course.

Over the next ten weeks, the lucky students will be receiving lessons in all aspects of golf including driving, iron play, chipping, putting and match play.

We cannot wait to see how they do - good luck!

## Did you know?

- 1) In Switzerland, it is illegal to own a single guinea pig, you have to own two so that they do not get lonely.
- 2) The colour purple does not appear largely on any countries' flag.
- 3) Penguins have knees under their skin.
- 4) A mule is the result of horse and donkey breeding.
- 5) Cherophobia is the fear of happiness.
- 6) The creator of match.com lost his girlfriend to a man she met on match.com.
- 7) Platypi are the only mammals that lay eggs.

By Josh Lamond



## How big of a problem is climate change?

**Everyone is aware of it but is anyone doing anything about it?**

In the past, we have experienced many ice ages but this is something different - ice is melting fast and at entirely unpredictable rates. The world as we know it could be over a lot quicker than we may have anticipated... but you can help!

It all starts with one of our biggest offenders - plastic. You may think that dropping your rubbish on the ground is not a big deal but where does it end up? Potentially around the neck of a turtle or in the stomachs of

fish and birds. This is all a part of the bigger picture, a bigger circle that all loops back to us!

Did you know that every stage of the plastic life cycle releases harmful carbon emissions into the atmosphere, contributing to global heating? Let's not be ignorant to what is happening to our planet, let's take action to mend it - reduce, reuse and recycle... no act is too small.

by Jasmine Smith and Katy Cooper



## Fun at the Freshers' Fair

**Here at The Academy at Shotton Hall we don't just learn in the classroom....**

At the beginning of term we held a freshers' fair to showcase the huge range of opportunities available to our students.

The event was extremely popular, particularly with our new Year 7s with many students signing up to try something new.

We offer a huge variety of clubs including choir, badminton, rugby, cheerleading, coding, Harry Potter and drama club.

Take a look on our website to see the full list of exciting activities!



## Thomas visits Everton for football trial

**Our very talented student, Thomas, recently took part in a football trial for Everton.**

Even after playing in a full football tournament the day before, Thomas was nothing short of brilliant. He performed superbly in the 25 degree heat and did himself, his parents and the school proud.

Thomas had a fantastic day training in the same ground as Rooney and other Everton legends.

We are very proud of Thomas and glad he had such an amazing experience, we have our fingers crossed for positive news!

We would also like to give a special thank you to Mr Mann who made this possible by recognising Thomas' talent.





## Students break down borders in Pivka

**A group of our students, along with five other schools across Europe, recently visited Pivka, Slovenia as part of an Erasmus project focussed on breaking down borders.**

The project aims to create virtual and augmented learning resources for use in classrooms. From looking at planets and the water cycle to virtual visits to art galleries, the project is certain to bring a lot of excitement to the classroom.

Our students received lots of praise from the other schools' staff for their behaviour. The Headteacher of the school in Slovenia said that students of the Academy were the politest and most well behaved visitors they had met.

The group also managed to fit in some sightseeing - they explored the beautiful town, visited the Slovenia Winter Olympic site and enjoyed a morning at the Julian Alps.

Well done for being such good representatives of our school, it sounds like you all had a great time!



## Singing success!

**Congratulations to our talented students who took their singing exams last term - the results are in and they have done brilliantly!**

Evan Atherton achieved a fantastic distinction for his Grade 5 pop vocals. Alice Rippon and Ellie Holmes both received a distinction at Grade 4.

Abi Gray received a merit for Grade 5 musical theatre and Ashleigh Armstrong bagged a distinction for her Grade 6 exam. Well done!



## New eco-building opened

**The start of the new school year marked the opening of our fantastic new eco-building.**

As the Academy grows, our new £1.1 million project provides extra classroom space alongside additional specialist science labs. Additionally, the new building gives us two extra changing rooms for students.

The new state-of-the-art eco-building was constructed by sustainable building experts, TG Escapes, using environmentally friendly materials such as sustainable timber and recycled glass.

The design of the building includes efficient energy systems and conserves heat during the winter to reduce energy wastage.

As well as the environmental benefits, the new classrooms blend beautifully into the natural surroundings of the school overlooking the main buildings and school yard.

We would like to say a huge thank you to TG Escapes who were fantastic during the project and to OCS for their support and organisation.

