



**The Academy
at Shotton Hall**

SPOTLIGHT

Spring newsletter | April 2020



National
Teaching
School



WELCOME to our spring newsletter

...which is coming to you under unprecedented circumstances. As the country fights the coronavirus pandemic and adapts to a very different way of life, we have worked hard to retain some sense of normality and keep students learning at home. I'd like to personally thank every parent and carer who has supported us in this endeavour.

Before the pandemic struck, lots of great things had happened in school, which is why we want to go ahead with our newsletter this term, albeit electronically rather than the usual printed copy.

Students took part in the much loved annual Pi Day and Reading Rocks Week - read all about that inside.

There have also been many sporting successes including netball champions, gymnastics gold medalists and even a Durham Inspirational Young Person of the Year!

This edition of *Spotlight* also highlights just how kind our students are, both in and outside of school, which makes me extremely proud. I'd like to give a special mention to Alfie Dixon who, during this difficult time, has taken it upon himself to provide 'survival packs' for other children in the community using his own pocket money - what a wonderful and selfless act to brighten up someone's day!

Finally, I'd like to thank our students, parents and carers once again for your continued support as we try our best during this very difficult time. I'd also like to extend my thanks, along with all staff at The Academy at Shotton Hall, to those in our community and beyond who are working on the front line to care for us all.

Miss A Hook, Head of School

Virtual school

To minimise disruption to students' education as much as possible, during this difficult and unprecedented time, the Academy is operating virtually via our 'virtual school'.

Our online learning platform is provided via Office 365. Here, students can access email, electronic resources and POD for additional resources and curriculum plans. Through this platform, staff set and receive work and can communicate directly with classes and individuals. If you experience problems with this then please contact school if you need help.

We are also providing useful learning resources for students to use at home as well as Easter activities via our 'virtual school' web page - please regularly check this page for new learning resources at: shottonhallacademy.co.uk/students/virtual-school



YEAR 7 CELEBRATE!

Year 7 are now officially half way through their first academic year at The Academy at Shotton Hall and they are off to a flying start!

To celebrate the achievements of our new Year 7s, we held the annual Year 7 transition assembly that congratulates students on their successes in school so far.

Each sept tutor chose two students to reward for their successful transition into secondary school life. In addition, awards for sportsman and sportswoman of the year were given out as well as awards for enthusiasm, kindness, getting involved and being a fantastic 'all rounder'.

The transition to secondary school can be a tricky time for students. Going from the comforts of a small primary school, to life in a big academy surrounded by over a thousand older students can be daunting, but year on year our students amaze us with their ability to adapt to new surroundings as they become more mature, independent individuals who navigate through the school with ease.

Well done for making it through. You're doing amazingly well – keep up the good work!

Ewan's kind volunteering

We have many kind students in our school and Ewan Patton is certainly one of them!



Ewan is a keen volunteer and is currently working towards becoming a 'dementia friend' in Chester-le-Street.

After a family member of Ewan's had suffered from dementia, he decided that he would like to help others by spending time with those suffering from the condition as he had seen first-hand how it can affect someone's quality of life.

Ewan is now due to have an interview which is the next

step in becoming an official 'dementia friend'.

Ewan said: "I feel so proud that I am doing something that my Granda would have appreciated. I could not help him, but I can certainly help others."

We are all very proud of Ewan's efforts. Not only is he a total credit to the school and year group, but he is also a credit to the community. Keep up the fantastic work!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Due to the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we cannot commit to any fixed school events at the moment. Parents' evenings and other planned events in school are postponed until further notice.

Please keep checking our website and social media channels for the latest updates.



Future careers

Year 10 students recently took part in various career-focussed activities to encourage them consider which career path they would like to pursue.

The students attended the Sunderland College Apprenticeship event where they were able to talk to different employers about the careers they could offer.

Colleges from the local area came into school to showcase what their centre can offer during our the 'World of Work' event where students had the opportunity to discuss potential career opportunities in the North East. It was an energetic, fun and hands-on event aimed at broadening our students' horizons.

The opportunities available when you leave school really are endless. Speak to Mrs McManus for more information on careers as well as further events coming soon...

Top library borrowers!

The list is in...

**Top library borrowers
January to 14 February 2020**

Grace Lin - 24 books
Alysa Brown - 19 books
Eden Thomson - 18 books
Ellie Mae Marshall - 11 books
Ellie Cornwell - 10 books

**Top 10 most borrowed books
January to 14 February 2020**

1. Witch Child by Celia Rees
2. My Hero Academia volume 2
3. Billionaire Boy by David Walliams
4. Once by Morris Gleitzman
5. Wonder by R J Palacio
6. Aguero: From the Playground to the Pitch
7. Coraline by Neil Gaiman
8. Crush by Svetlana Chmakova
9. Ferrari: Pure Passion and Power
10. Ghost by Jason Reynolds

We're on Twitter and Facebook!



@shottonhall



facebook.com/
shottonhallacademy

Spelling buzz...

There was a certain buzz in the air about spelling in the lead up to the Year 9 Spelling Bee during Reading Rocks week this term.

The Spelling Bee consisted of three rounds: Round 1- Last Man Standing - where students challenged one another until only one is left on the stage, Round 2 - Quick Fire - with 60 seconds on the clock to earn as many points as they could and finally, Round 3 - Sept Tutors - taking one for their team and attempting some tricky spellings to earn points!

It was tough competition but once again, Miss Kell's sept, 8S2, came out on top beating the team in second place by just two points - well done students!

Get practicing your spellings everyone, for the next Spelling Bee competition...



Alex struck gold!

Congratulations to Year 8 student, Alex White, who struck gold earlier this month at the regional gymnastics championships.

Alex is an avid gymnast who represented Team GB in Austria last year. Since then he has continued to participate in competitions and was crowned champion in the NDP Level 2 competition, bringing home a gold medal.

Alex now advances to the Trampoline and Tumbling British Championships at the NIA in Birmingham where he will face tough competition from around Britain.

Good luck Alex - we are rooting for you!

Reading really does ROCK!

This term we celebrated all things reading for 'Reading Rocks Week' at the Academy.

The week was filled with various competitions and exciting activities including re-creating book covers of favourite books, contributing to a never-ending story, getting crafty with old book pages and creating book trailers.

Throughout the week students took part in a treasure hunt with a search for five golden tickets around the school. Tickets were found by Lewis Henderson, James Brown, Warren Thompson and Ollie Robinson who were rewarded

with Amazon book vouchers.

Author Dan Ingram-Brown visited the Academy and delivered a workshop to Year 7 and 8 students where they learned all about what inspires his writing and even had a go of writing something creative themselves.

Staff awarded students who demonstrated excellent reading skills with a raffle ticket; over 50 students were entered into the prize draw and Ellie Bridgewater was the lucky winner!

On the final day of 'Reading Rocks Week', students were treated to a 'whole day read'; the first five minutes of each lesson were dedicated to reading part of a story. By the end of the day, students had a whole story read to them by five different teachers from across the curriculum.

Students also raised money for the Book Aid charity by hosting a pre-loved book sale - thank you to all who contributed and bought books and to those who volunteered to help out.



WHAT DOES EASTER MEAN FOR YOU?

For this Easter edition of Spotlight, we decided to find out what Easter really means to the teachers at the Academy...

Mrs Peele: "An acceptable time to eat as many Creme Eggs as possible!"

Mrs Scott: "Lie ins!"

Mrs Fields: "Easter is the time where I give up sweets and chocolates for 40 days and 40 nights. Easter Sunday is a day for spending time with my nearest and dearest - usually in sunny Scarborough."

Miss Farrell: "Easter is my favourite school holiday! It's a time to rest and recuperate and it's a lovely time to get together with family who I don't see very often. I was brought up a catholic so, although I don't go regularly, I like to visit church at Easter."

Miss Stewart: "Family time."

Mr Mann: "Easter means eating chocolate eggs for breakfast without guilt and having Easter egg hunts in the garden with my daughters."

Miss Siddle: "Easter usually means a holiday somewhere warm. This year we're off to Spain but my best friend is also getting married so it is even more special this year."

Miss Evans: "Baby lambs running and jumping in the fields; daffodils appearing in the most random of places; daylight lasting longer and of course too much chocolate!"

Mr Raine: "Easter to me means long beach walks, watching the football and a massive Sunday dinner with the family."

Mrs Brennan: "As a child of the 70s, Easter meant a new dress, some new sandals with new white socks and a

new cardigan which my mam had knitted - not forgetting Easter eggs but you didn't get as many as you do now!"

Mrs Edwards-Barkel: "Easter, like any holiday time, is time for family and friends - catching up with those I love and appreciating that they're in my life!"

Miss Wearmouth: "Easter means more to me when abroad because other countries celebrate it more. Spain goes wild with it. Bigger than Christmas, New Year and your birthday put together. Imagine religious processions in the streets, families dressed in traditional costumes, lots of people on horseback, flamenco dancing competitions all over town, partying late into the night, salted, dried fish eaten with fino sherry. That last bit I don't recommend!"

This question was asked before the onset of the coronavirus crisis, when none of us thought we would be spending Easter this way, many of us away from our loved ones. We do however have the advantage of technology on our side so that we can find new ways of being together, many of which are totally free to use.

However you are spending your Easter holidays, whether that be baking some sweet treats, working on a new skill or reading that book you've never got around to, stay safe and look out for ideas on our social media channels for ways to stay entertained!



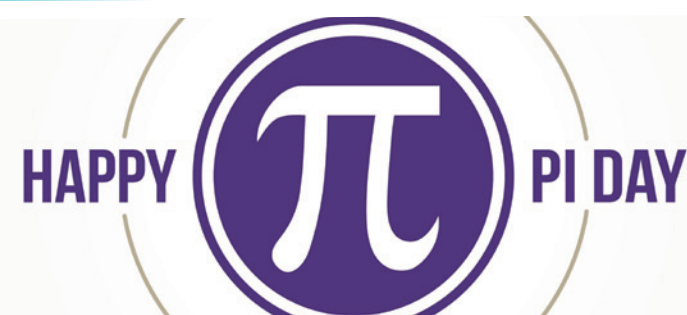
Charitable students

Across the world many people are forced to leave their homes because of war, natural disaster, political persecution or terrorism. Imagine leaving all of your friends and family as well as all of your belongings behind and coming to live in a new country. How would you feel?

As part of their active citizenship GCSE, two of Mrs Chadwick's classes organised a clothes, toys and shoes collection for the North of England Refugee Service. Students from across the school donated to the cause which aimed to improve the quality of life for these people, even just a little bit.

Sometimes, it's hard to take a step back and imagine yourself in a position of hardship, such as a refugee, when we have never (and hopefully will never) be in their shoes, but this collection proved that the Academy's students are empathetic, kind and generous.

Spotlight would like to say a huge well done to those involved in organising the collection and those who donated!



PI DAY

It's that time of year again when the maths department gets really excited... National Pi Day!

14 March saw celebrations of Pi Day, founded in 1988. Pi (π) Day has become an international holiday, celebrated all around the world. The numbers in the date (3/14) match the first three digits of the mathematical constant Pi 3.14.

The Academy at Shotton Hall threw themselves into the celebrations with activities including hula hoop competitions and a stopwatch challenge. Staff

also encouraged students to collect 314 tins of food to donate to the local food bank.

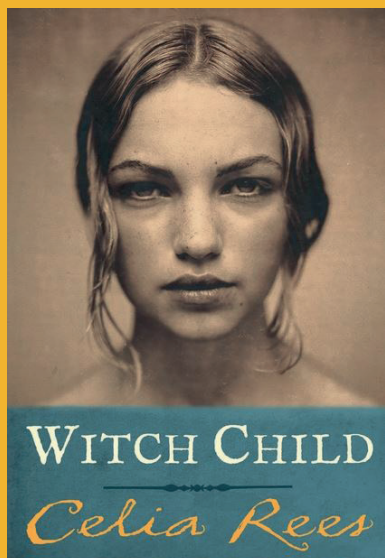
In addition, each maths teacher was assigned a digit of Pi and students were challenged to find all 13 digits and write the relevant teacher's name alongside the correct number for a chance of winning an exciting prize!



Netball success!

The Academy's Year 7 girls' netball team were recently crowned champions of the East Durham Schools Netball Tournament, meaning they have officially won all of their games!

This was their first ever tournament together and they had been training every week and playing really well to prepare for the tournament. Mrs Mason said: "I am very proud of them; they've worked so hard, they really deserve it." Keep up the excellent team work girls!



Witch Child

Pages from a journal are loosely sewn into a quilt. A quilt that lies undisturbed for more than three hundred years until it is carefully taken apart for cleaning and out of its folds falls a powerful and moving story. The story of Mary - granddaughter of a witch.

Witch Child is a fictional story set at the time of the real-life witch trials which swept through areas of England and America. From the opening lines of "I am Mary. I am a witch. Or so some would call me", readers are taken through many twists and turns to discover if Mary truly is magical. From here, they started to question everything they have been led to believe. Are witches real?

This book is officially the most borrowed book of the term from the LRC! Miss Gaze has been teaching students in LINK all about witches, which is where the interest of this story sprouted from. Judging from its popularity, you may want to grab a copy quickly before it shoots off the shelves again...

Teamwork making the dream work...

The Year 7 boys' basketball team won the County School Games Basketball Tournament and will now represent the area in the County School Games finals!

Two teams were entered, an 'A' team and a 'B' team and, in true underdog fashion, our B team played better basketball and worked hard as a team. Both teams demonstrated excellent respect towards the officials.

Mr Mann said: "Our students were first to shake hands at the end of each game which made me very proud."

Special mention to Jackson Wilkinson who was the stand out player of the tournament!



LITERATURE ROCKS!

What's your Achilles' Heel? Who do you class as an Adonis? Have you ever opened Pandora's Box and regretted it? Do you know what I'm talking about? Year 9 does...

This half term, Year 9 has been studying literary allusions in English in a bid to increase their analytical skills. The year group has been exploring religious allusions as well as allusions from Greek mythology which allows them to see where certain literary connections originate from!

Achilles was supposedly dipped in a mythical, magical lake by his mother who hoped to give him the

power of invulnerability; unfortunately, she dipped the baby by his ankle and therefore, failed to cover his ankle in the water. Years later, he was killed when an arrow was shot through his Achilles: his one weak spot. Nowadays, the phrase is used to explain what someone's weakness is: my Achilles is chocolate!

Why not have a look into some other literary allusions to see what you can find out?



Ready, Set, Debate!

Seven Year 11 students recently competed in a national speaking competition organised by the English Speaking Union.

William Turner, Lydia Matterson, Chloe Easterbrook, Grace Molyneux, Aidan Grand, Holly Cockcroft and Eleanor O'Reilly went head to head with debaters from across the North of England at All Saints Academy in Ingleby Barwick.

Our students took on the roles of speakers, questioners, and chairs, grappling with topical questions including whether free speech includes the right to use hate speech

and whether the term 'body positivity' is a helpful way to talk about health. The judges were full of praise for our teams, commenting on their confidence, clarity and their ability to speak persuasively about complex issues.

Mr Favaro and Mr Raine were delighted with how the teams performed and plan to hold more debating events throughout the school - watch this space.

Catching up with the community

Following the success of last term's visit, a group of students from different year groups visited local care home, Hawthorns, where they read to elderly residents.

Reece Lawton, Ellie Fox, Millie Clark, Lana Pearson, Neave Lynch, Josh Lamond and Isabella Corr represented the school during this visit and each read one to one with the residents of the care home. It was also a nice opportunity for many of the residents to have a chat with our young students and to find out what life is like as a young person in today's world! Both the

students and residents were full of smiles throughout the visit.

Miss Jamieson escorted the students and said: "The students truly showed the school in the best possible light. They read to a number of elderly residents in the care home on a one to one basis - the confidence that this took was exceptional and it was inspiring to watch."



La Fête Des Rois

Our students have been celebrating "La Fête Des Rois" (The Festival of the Kings) in their languages lessons.

This is celebrated in France (and lots of places in Europe) to mark 6 January. Most families in France buy a special cake (a "galette") which is made of puff pastry filled with almond paste. Hidden in the cake is a small porcelain figure called a 'fève' and if you find it in your slice you are crowned King or Queen for the day!

We celebrated in our own way and you can see pictures of some of our royals above.



Hawthorns have invited our students back for a third visit as they were so impressed with what they saw.

Residents can't wait for the return of students!

If you would like to take part in the next visit, email Miss Pounder for more information.

ALFIE IS A HERO!



One of our very caring students, Alfie Dixon, has been named the 'Durham Inspirational Young Person of the Year' by Durham Police at the Durham Young Heroes Awards.

Alfie was nominated for his tireless work and dedication in supporting the local community. After doing some research, Alfie wanted to help people cope with stress as he believed that sometimes members of the community cannot access the help and support they need.

He has set up numerous local projects to help people cope with stress by organising all the venues, funding, support, and contributors himself. Alfie has set up his own homework club where young people and their families can come along for a meal and get the support they may need. He has also set up the Nature World where young people

are encouraged to plant their own food and be aware of environmental issues as well as build their confidence.

Alfie had a wonderful time at the Young Heroes event and said he loved hearing other people speak about what they do. He finds creating the projects and watching them grow very rewarding.

Mrs Marriott said: "Alfie is an extremely hard-working and caring student who always tries his best in school. It is a delight to hear that he is going above and beyond in such a selfless way for the less fortunate members of his community."

Well done Alfie!



Students perform at Holocaust Memorial Day event

15 students from the Academy were recently invited to perform in a Holocaust Memorial Day event at The Lubetkin Theatre in Peterlee.

Our chamber choir performed *Blowin' in the Wind* and a group of dancers performed to a poem read by Adam Elliott. All students performed at their usual high standard and demonstrated maturity and sensitivity throughout such a moving evening.

Well done everyone.

Teacher training opportunities

Shotton Hall
SCITT
School Centred Initial Teacher Training

Did you know that The Academy at Shotton Hall helps to train the next generation of new teachers and are looking for new recruits to start in September 2020?

Through the North East Learning Trust, we are a partner of Shotton Hall SCITT, the Trust's very own outstanding teacher training provider.

Trainees start their training here at the Academy before undertaking

placements in schools right across the North East.

Applications are now open for primary and secondary courses starting in September 2020 with bursaries of up to £26k available for certain subjects.

To find out about entry requirements and the opportunities available, as well as hearing from people who have taken the leap and changed career visit:

www.shottonhallscitt.co.uk

