



# SPOTLIGHT

Spring newsletter | **March 2021**



National  
Teaching  
School



## WELCOME to our spring newsletter...

The coronavirus pandemic has caused many problems, economically, socially and certainly educationally to say to least. However, we see the best in our students when we need it the most. Never is that truer than now. Despite the many hurdles and setbacks the COVID-19 journey has thrown our way, the optimism of our children has been a beacon guiding us to better times.

This term once again, we have been asked to do things we have never done before. We have naturally been apprehensive, but our students have taken things in their stride and been stoic in their response. This has helped us immeasurably and for that we are both thankful and grateful.

We are living through history; the stories we have will now be part of our lives for ever. In schools, these times will be studied. Future generations will ask

'what was it like?' Our students can answer for themselves, but they should know to add that they 'did it,' if asked later. They have a lot to be rightly proud of. They worked, listened, helped, took part, looked out for others, accepted things weren't perfect and got on with making the best of things. They should be very proud of themselves, we certainly are of them.

Despite the ongoing challenges and changes, we want to celebrate the wonderful achievements and efforts that have taken place during this term, both remotely during Virtual School and within school.

I wish you all a well-deserved, restful Easter break. Better days are ahead...

**Miss A Hook, Head of School**

## Hello Year 6

**We are so happy you will be joining us from September and we cannot wait to meet you all!**

We have lots of plans for you to get to know the school and for us to get to know you before you join us as brand new Year 7s in September.

In the coming months we will be filling the transition area of our school website and social media channels with important, handy information before the move to 'big school'.

In the meantime, you can visit our YouTube channel, The Academy at Shotton Hall, to experience virtual tours and open evenings. We look forward to welcoming you very soon!

**Mrs Sharpe,**  
Head of Transition



# Question time!

## We asked our students and teachers "What are you most looking forward to doing when lockdown ends?" Here's what they had to say...

"Meeting up with my family and friends and ordering sesame seed chicken at TGI Fridays. Love it!" - *Mrs A Bradley*

"Seeing my hairdresser." *Mrs Wearmouth*

"I'm looking forward to giving all my family and friends a big hug!" - *Miss Farrell*

"Going back to my tap class will be a joy. To see my dancing friends and have a tap dance will be wonderful" - *Mrs Sharpe*

"Being able to visit my friends in different parts of the country!" - *Miss P Bradley*

"Playing cricket and going to a restaurant with friends (yes, I do have some friends!)" - *Mr Raine*

"Eating a meal that I haven't cooked!" - *Mrs Siddle*

"Coffee and cake with friends, spontaneous meetings, family BBQs, the Tyneside Cinema, book

shops, picnics or fish and chips on the beach... and John Lewis trips!" - *Mrs Walshaw*

"Being able to get back to normal without the COVID restrictions" - *Jasmine, Year 8*

"Going to see my Nana and eating the Sunday roast she claims she made (when we all know it was my Grandad!)" - *Neve, Year 9*

"Doing all of my hobbies again." - *Taylor, Year 7*

"I am looking forward to being able to go out and enjoy activities that I haven't been able to do in over a year. Also I look forward to being able to see my friends and possibly go on holiday with my family." - *Mia, Year 9*

"I'm looking forward to going out to eat in restaurants because I'm really missing that!" - *Keira, Year 7*

"I am most looking forward to seeing my friends and being able to go out again. I am also looking forward to going back to the library again." - *Rihanna, Year 9*

"When this lockdown ends I am looking forward to being able to meet my newborn baby cousin" - *Darcy, Year 7*

## IMPORTANT DATES for your diary

**12 APR** - Back to school

**03 MAY** - Bank holiday

**29 MAY** - Break up for half term

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

## Inventor Josh!

British inventors are among the world's best and some of our students have been channelling the spirit of George Stephenson and Thomas Edison throughout lockdown.

Year 8 student, Joshua McBryde, has been following in the footsteps of modern inventor James Dyson by making his own Hoover from a plastic bottle and hair-dryer. Take a look at his prototype models – he's one to watch for the future, don't you think?



## We're social!

Follow our social media accounts to stay up to date with all of the latest news from around the Academy!



@shottonhall



@shottonhallacademy



@shacademy

# International Women's Day

**To celebrate International Women's Day, Year 9 took part in a gender research project during their English lessons. Ellie tells us why we still need this important day in 2021 here...**

Across the world, on the 8th March, people celebrate International Women's Day. This date is devoted to celebrating how far women have come in society, politics and economics.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the usual marches, protests and speeches could not

take place; however, many people turned to social media to show their support and appreciate the remarkable women in the public sphere and in our own lives.

Every year, the organisers choose a new theme to focus on. This year, it's #ChooseToChallenge, which focuses on calling out inequality

and gender biases in work, sports, school and everyday life. This is a major issue for a lot of women, and it's important to speak out about the normalised sexism and misogyny which can still exist in people's lives. Never be afraid to stand up for what's right: one voice can make a difference!

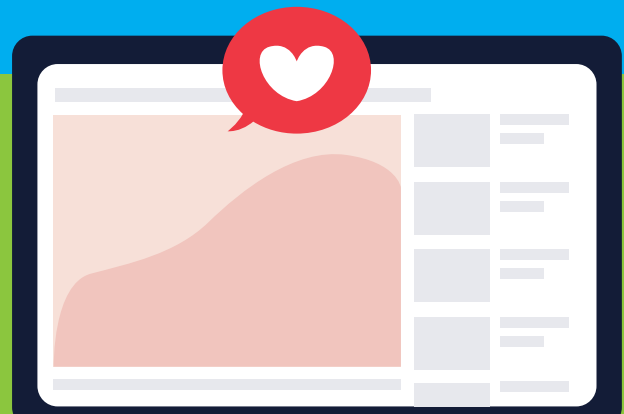
## Lateral flow tests

**Here at the Academy, like all schools across the country, we have been implementing a comprehensive new testing system designed to find cases of COVID-19 before students re-enter school.**

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms, and rapid lateral flow tests help to find cases in people who may have no symptoms but are still infectious and can give the virus to others.

The test usually involves taking a sample from your tonsils (or where they would have been) and from your nose, using a swab. The best thing about LFTs is that you can get a result in 30 minutes, meaning they are super speedy! Our testing centre has been set up in the sports hall. Well done to the staff who have organised a seamless testing system and to the students who have made their jobs straightforward by arriving on time and following the instructions to a T!

If you need any pointers on how to complete your LFT, we have a video on our YouTube channel which shows Mr Robson completing the test – it's worth a watch!



## Reflections on lockdown

**We are all having to adapt to online school: from kids and young adults to parents and teachers, those who just want to enjoy their freedom instead find themselves stuck at the laptop!**

After roughly 25 hours of online lessons in a week, our weekends can feel like our 40-minute lunch break. Petition for Friday to become a weekend day coming soon!

My history teacher says we are 'living in a period of important history', and I like to think about how we will remember this time. Just imagine – the year is 2030, we'll all be 10 years older, and life will have changed significantly.

Kids who are my age now will most likely be taught about the struggles of the pandemic. We can tell the 10-year-old 2020 babies about what it was like not

to go to school, as well as the classic lockdown games of going to the shop only to find it empty (apart from someone with 10 packs of toilet roll and 20 packets of pasta in their trolley!) Oh, and don't forget when flour was like gold dust and everyone was making banana bread. It really is something we'll never forget.

Jokes aside, there were some big struggles to overcome in 2020. Now, writing this on the 7th March, with schools going back tomorrow, we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

By Ella Hird, Year 10

# Women in WWI poetry

Miss Begum's Year 7 English class have written some beautiful poems to celebrate the role of women in WWI – we think they're fantastic! Well done Leah and Lillie.

*Leah Easterbrook's poem:*

The morning glistening floods,  
Across hills and mountains,  
Farming the crops and goods,  
Passing lakes and fountains,  
Doing the things as a wife,  
My hoe clutched in my hand,  
I just wish to have a life,  
Gazing across this wasteland.

*Lillie Mae Henderson's poem:*

I would go to the kitchen and  
start making food,  
The rest of my family would sit  
down,  
My daughter in a mood,  
She wanted her father to come  
home now,  
Days and days they miss him  
more,  
I try and distract them, knowing  
he is gone.



## Learning a skill in lockdown

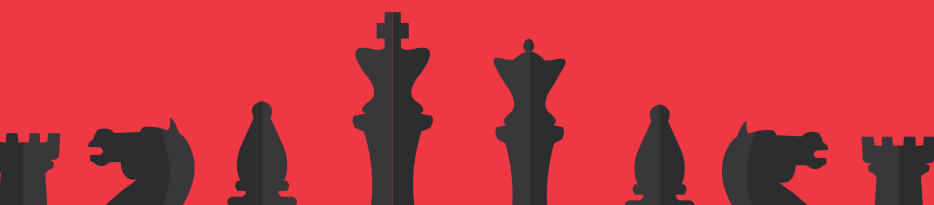
By Quinn Mosely

**Throughout lockdown, I have tried many new fun things. My favourite one has got to be chess! I have thoroughly enjoyed learning to play. It is an extremely calm and peaceful mind game which includes strategy techniques. Chess only involves two players, and the game proceeds as follows:**

The game starts out with each player on either side of the board – white always goes first. Each player has the following pieces: 1 king, 1 queen, 2 rooks, 2 bishops, 2 knights and eight pawns. These pieces each have a numeric value, for example: the knight and bishop each have 3, the pawn has 1, the rook has 5 and the queen has 9 – the king has a value of 0. The pieces each move in a different way around the board and capture in a different way. The ultimate

aim of the game is to 'checkmate' the opponent's king. The numerical values of each piece help us determine whether to trade a piece for an opponent piece. Of course, every piece is different, has different moves and even strengths and weaknesses.

Overall, I think it is an amazing game and it is even fun to learn – I really enjoy playing chess and it has been an enjoyable thing to do throughout lockdown!



## After Lockdown

**It has been a year no one will ever forget, and we will wave goodbye to this pandemic with contentment.**

I think we will all have a smile on our face as we leave COVID-19 behind us, and things will be back to normal before long. The playgrounds will be flooded with jubilant children, the smaller shops will earn money they lost to the pandemic and seeing other people will not seem like a rare occasion anymore! Some people have missed out on SATs, GCSEs, leavers' parties, birthdays, graduations and prom, but we will make up for that when we can come close to each other again. I wish it could happen sooner, but we will get there eventually. Stay home, save lives, protect the NHS.

By Katie Skinner





# A global warning!

As part of Fairtrade Fortnight this term, student Ragesh has eight ways to reduce your carbon footprint and have a positive impact on the environment.

**1) Use a reusable coffee cup/ water bottle:** 20,000 plastic bottles are bought every second, and bottled water is 2000 times more energy intensive than tap water. Plastic bottles also degrade over time and create micro plastics that you consume.

**2) Turn the heating down:** If you turn your heating down a few degrees, look at how much energy (as well as money!) you've saved.

**3) Only use kettles when you need to and fill them with only the water you need.**

**4) Go onto social media:** This may sound counter-intuitive, since phones use electricity, but there are hundreds of petitions you can sign with a click to use your voice for good!

**5) Eat less meat and/or animal products:** I'm not going to force you to go vegan, but eating less meat isn't going to hurt you (plus, each meal will probably be cheaper overall!) Pro tip: veggie food doesn't have to be bland - just add seasoning or spices to it.

**6) Walk:** Some people may have become fitness fanatics during quarantine but why not kill 2 birds with one stone and improve the climate at the same time as your health.

**7) Use green energy:** Now you could either go big and buy solar panels, which are zero-emissions, or you could switch supplier. While eco-friendly suppliers are usually more expensive, the higher the demand and the supply, the cheaper the price. Simply put, the more people being green, the cheaper energy costs are.

**8) Finally,** buying local produce reduces emissions created during transport. You will also feel the benefits of your actions since the money you spend is reinvested onto the economy.

Most of us hate wearing masks, yet if we don't reduce emissions now, we will have to wear masks everywhere. Think sensibly and start changing now to change the planet!

By Ragesh

## Children's Mental Health Week 2021

Children's Mental Health Week took place at the beginning of February with the theme of 'express yourself'.

To celebrate and explore the issues, students took part in activities every day in Sept time, focusing on trying something new. Our students came up with suggestions for feeling calmer and focusing on the positives. Here are just two of their ideas:

**Rebecca Middleton:** "Over this lockdown, life has been very difficult. When we go out, it's important not to give people the cold shoulder and to make an effort, because it's nice to see people and finally interact! I personally found refuge by simply gaming online with friends. Obviously, everyone has different coping mechanisms, but there can be a true sense of accomplishment in gaming (or even just messing around!)"

**Finlay Scott:** "I know during lockdown everyone has dealt with many issues and problems. Feeling alone and anxious is a major worry, but there are many ways to deal with this. My favourite is an app called SilverCloud, which helps release anxiety and allows you to talk about your problems. We are all dealing with different issues, but just know you aren't alone."

## A special mention

The engagement with virtual school across all year groups has been amazing and our teachers have been really impressed with the quality of work and the level of effort across the board.

Two of our pupils in particular have gone above and beyond. Sheryl Ejim, Year 8, and Michelle Ejim, Year 7, have had 100% attendance and engagement in all of their virtual lessons, which is a feat in itself. Not just that, but their engagement and, most

importantly, their enthusiasm has been a joy for teachers and fellow pupils alike.

Mrs Walshaw said: "They are both inspirational!" Well done girls - your efforts have been incredible!



# 10k a day!

By Beth, Year 9

Cancer Research UK has set up the 'Walk All Over Cancer' campaign, which involves walking 10,000 steps a day for the entire month of March in order to raise money for life-saving cancer research.

Walking is a COVID-safe activity and is a fun way to pass the time, as well as improving mental health and releasing endorphins to make you feel happier. Being active can lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart problems in the future, and those who take part will experience many benefits, such as improved fitness, maintaining a healthy weight and burning calories.

Based on the average person's stride, 10,000 steps are equal to 5 miles or 1 hour and 40 minutes of walking. That means that by the end of the month you'll have walked a total of 150 miles, which is about the distance of walking from London to Manchester.

*There are many different ways you can increase your step count:*

- Take part in an online fitness class at home.

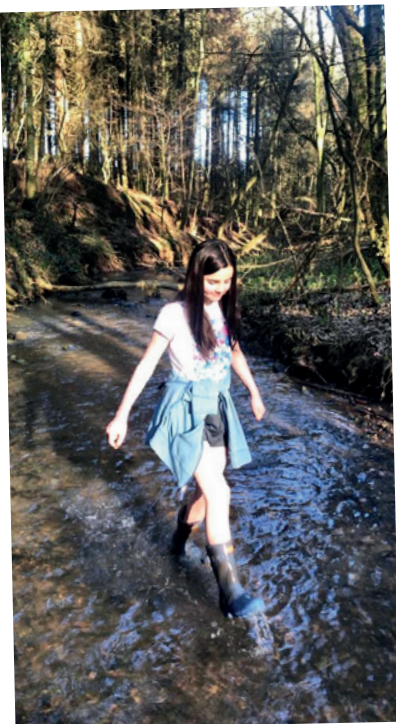
- Take the dog for an extra walk.
- Explore your local area.
- Dance around to music in your bedroom.
- Meet a friend for a socially distanced walk.

**Could you complete 10,000 steps every day for a month? Have a go and try to complete your own 10K a day challenge.**

## The Beauty of Nature

By Emily Moore

Emily went for a walk just outside her house – have you been doing the same? Next time, why not write a description and truly appreciate the beauty of nature...



Although everyone is talking about climate change and how we are destroying the planet, nobody is talking about how stunning the world is right now. The birds are tweeting outside my window; my garden is now a daffodil heaven. Since I live on a farm where there is a small stream, I sauntered down towards it.

Glistening in the sun, the stream was captivating. Pebbles laid at the bottom of the brook and limpid water gently trickled down this beautiful valley. Like a heavenly paradise, the sky was baby blue without a cloud in sight. Tall and luscious, trees surrounded me as I followed the stream into a quaint forest. The distant sound of car horns and engines roaring became fainter and fainter until all I could hear was the delightful sound of

a blue tit tweeting and the water flowing down the stream.

On the bank of the brook, I saw footprints - animal footprints. In the distance, I could see the silhouette of a horse and a foal standing angelically on the hill, watching everything that was happening below. As I was making my way back home, I saw a fallen tree (that I had just avoided by going round it in my other visits to this magical wonderland) that I wanted to use as a bridge. I kept my balance as I tiptoed across this sturdy tree, making sure not to stand on any frail branches.

If you want to visit this particular stream, it is called Bellow's Burn and, eventually, it joins the North Sea at Crimdon. I wonder what you will find there...

# Revision tips!

During remote learning, our school YouTube channel provided students with tips, tricks and advice to help stay on top of revision and succeed.

You can visit our channel, The Academy at Shotton Hall, to watch a huge range of videos including performances, morale boosters and even instructions for doing a lateral flow test!

Our study skills video showed students how to make the most of their revision at home. Here are some of the tips summarised:

1) Write a list of topics and plot them onto a calendar to create a revision timetable. Don't forget to leave gaps between topics so that your brain has to work harder to retrieve the information – this helps it to stick.

2) Spend 20-30 minutes on each topic before moving on: this is called interleaving and

makes your revision more effective.

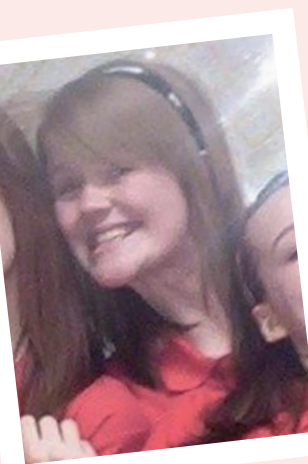
3) Take regular breaks.

4) Don't just read, highlight or underline notes – simply reading isn't effective revision!

5) Look at the activities your teachers use for SMART tasks and create your own retrieval practice questions to test yourself.

6) Make sure to check out the video for some tips from your teachers.

**In the video you will spot some photographs of your teachers when they were in school. Can you guess any of them below?**



# Career inspiration

This term saw the return of National Careers Week which aims to teach young people about the opportunities that the future can hold, helping them to start painting a picture of what life might be like after The Academy at Shotton Hall.

To help open your eyes to a world of opportunities student, Anna Carlisle, has created a list of interesting jobs to help inspire you:

- **A climate change officer or scientist:** These people look in great detail at how our current actions are changing the world, and help propose plans to make our planet a greener place.
- **A medical researcher:** A medical researcher studies health care problems and helps to find possible cures and treatments for diseases.
- **An architect:** architects help build a better physical future. This job involves drawing creative sketches of buildings and structures and carrying out big projects.
- **A journalist:** journalists can travel around the world broadcasting and sharing news. Many great journalists have gone from writing an article in their school newspaper to being editor of a big newspaper.
- **A movie director:** a director writes and controls the production of movies and television shows.
- **An entrepreneur:** an entrepreneur is someone who develops exciting (and hopefully profitable!) business plans - could you find a gap in the market and fill it with a brand new idea?



# Reading Rocks Week!

Reading Rocks Week this year took place from at the beginning of March, in conjunction with World Book Day.

Here at The Academy at Shotton Hall, staff and students took part in a huge range of activities, from quizzes and competitions such as the Masked Reader where students had to guess the teacher through a Snapchat filter. One of our most popular competitions was 'pet shelfies' where students submitted

pictures of their pets reading. Take a look at some of the entries below and enjoy marvelling at our students' creativity!

Well done to: Alisha Dalton, Autumn Huntington, Brandon Liddle, Ellie Rowell, Emily Moore, Erin McCallum, Finlay Scott, Josh Elliott, Joshua Bell,

Kara Watson, Keira Garside, Krissy Howe, Lillie Mae Henderson, Lyza Race, Mason Ratcliffe, Owen Wilson, Ruby Slade, Sophie Cartwright, Summer Watson, Zoey Reynolds, Ava Nord, and anyone else who entered one of our competitions. You all rock!

