



Father Christmas Visits Armfield Academy

With Rudolph on furlough the Armfield Academy site team were called upon to ensure that Father Christmas could still travel to Armfield Academy to see our primary pupils. The sleigh was prepared, the presents were wrapped, the elf was ready, and by tractor mode Father Christmas made his grand entrance to the pleasure and surprise of the awaiting children. A magical memory for all involved!

Inside Stories *A term filled with fun!*





Dear Parents/Carers,

As we draw to the end of the term I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a really great New Year, I am sure you would all agree we certainly need one. From the bottom of my heart I thank you all for your overwhelmingly support and kindness over the course of the last ten months. Please do not underestimate how much your understanding and kind words have really helped staff to keep going in difficult circumstances; it is the staff who have really kept the good ship Armfield afloat. As I have stated previously, your support to me personally has given me the strength to get through the most challenging of times I have ever faced as an educationalist. School has been very different, operating completely out of kilter with the normal parameters of how schools' function. We are slowly but surely getting back to normality, attendance is good (approx. 96%), the majority of students really do appreciate the importance of their schooling more than ever and as such getting on with the job of building back better into their studies. Overall, the behaviour of the vast majority of students across the entire academy has been very pleasing, of course there are a small number who can always do better and as appropriate we openly welcome parental support in this regard. However, life goes on, it's Christmas... albeit somewhat different this year. Let us look forward to a really well earned break; with it all the joys of Christmas; the gifts under the tree; the lights in the windows; the cards in the mail; turkey dinners with family and friends; snow in the yard (maybe not...); stockings hanging in the living room; and shouts of "Merry Christmas" to those who pass us in the streets or indeed with some "Bah Humbug...". Yet, Christmas can be a season of great joy. It is a time of great

love for all of us. It can and should be a time of healing and renewed strength, which all of us need as we move into 2021. During the final week of term, I have been delighted and humbled to see our students actively thinking about the many families who are facing significant hardship, deep personal loss or indeed both this year. In this regard, student and parental support of our Christmas charities has been overwhelming. Collectively, we have made a difference for a great many local families who need a little extra help.

Last but not least we welcomed Father Christmas and his donkeys to meet the Early Years Children last year... well this year we welcomed two of Father Christmas' reindeers; Cupid and Dasher who were excused from preparations for the big day to come and visit Armfield Academy; both orphans, both 3 years old... incredible experience for the children who absolutely loved them.

So as the famous rabbit once said "That's all folks"...

We will finish for the Christmas holidays on Thursday 17th December. Armfield Academy will reopen on Monday 4th January at the normal times as per the Year bubble structure.

Once again, on behalf of all the staff at Armfield Academy, I thank you for your continued support and I wish you a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Yours faithfully,

Mark Kilmurray



Christmas Food Hamper Appeal

Staff, their family members and our local community at Armfield Academy have donated non-perishable food items to provide some extra Christmas cheer to our families during this difficult time. Staff also appealed to our local food suppliers for support and we were overwhelmed by their generosity. Tesco donated 100 medium selection boxes through their community projects; Fox's donated a carload of their tasty biscuits and snacks; Morrisons donated various food items through their 'buy-a-bag' scheme and McDonalds donated 20 'Happy Meal' vouchers. We cannot thank all our donors and volunteers enough for their kindness. Armfield staff wish all our families 'A safe and happy Christmas!'



NURSERY

Well, despite the Covid restrictions, here in Armfield's nursery we have continued to enjoy lots of safe learning through play and we have had a very successful return after the summer holidays.

At the start of the term, we enjoyed getting to know each other and painted some wonderful self-portraits. We then looked at a giant 'maize' plant and some wheat as we found out all about what happens at Harvest time. We loved watching videos of combine harvesters the most! Next, we engaged in Halloween activities, including scooping out pumpkins, a reading of the 'Room on The Broom' story and pumpkin printing also. Lola even got to take home 'Peter' the pumpkin too.

As the weather began to get cooler, we were able to observe the autumnal changes and some of us collected leaves, conkers and pine cones with our families. We then celebrated Bonfire Night with a camp circle and pretend fire and waved our home-made, edible sparklers around before eating them all up! They tasted delicious. We hope you enjoyed looking at the photographs on our class story.



Many thanks to everyone who shared photographs on our class Dojo page. The children enjoy sharing their special family times with one another. The class Dojo app has been a huge success with our families, so please continue to support these home-school links.

Finally, the Nursery children have been super busy practising their Christmas songs and making Christmas decorations for around the school with lots of festive treats along the way, too.

Many thanks to you all for making the Autumn term a successful one. I wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and a happy holiday. We very much look forward to welcoming you all back in 2021.



P

Primary



Recently we have established links with two care homes, Owls Care Home and Park View Care Home, which both sit near to our academy. We sent the residents some questions to answer about what they liked at Christmas. The children have put together a decorated bag which contains cards and pictures for each of the forty residents. We have thoroughly enjoyed spreading Christmas cheer to all!



Roxie, Oscar, Jack and Keewa in Year 2 came up with the idea of having a friendship bench in the playground. They wanted somewhere for a child to sit if they were feeling lonely or needed someone to play with or chat to. They wrote a letter to Mrs McKinnon to tell her about their idea. She replied and told them what a wonderful idea it was, so it was decided we would hold a non-uniform day to raise the £150 needed. Families were incredibly generous and we raised a total of £230.40. We donated the extra £80.40 to supporting families at Christmas and we have the bench on order to arrive after Christmas.



Design Technology



Year 8 Design and Technology pupils have been working through an engineering challenge where they have designed and made prototype bridges. The challenge was to produce a strong and stable bridge out of fairly weak raw materials. They studied forces which affect frame structures and focused on the theory of triangulation where they gained knowledge about structural components such as columns, struts and ties. The bridges were constructed individually and tested with various degrees of success. All the students enjoyed the challenge and will never look at the Big One rollercoaster or Blackpool Tower in the same way again. Well done, Year 8! Our next challenge in the field of design is to focus on branding a cosmetic product and packaging. Onwards and upwards!



PE in Full Swing at Armfield

Whilst the first term has been somewhat unusual, it has been fantastic to welcome back some of our budding sports stars and, of course, meet some new ones! All year groups have delved into some entirely new activities this year, ranging from hockey to short tennis.

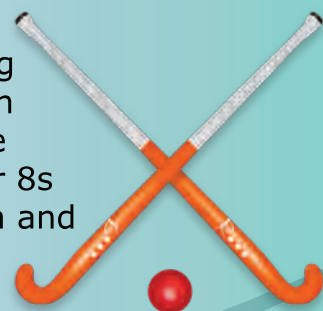


Blackpool's scorching September meant we were able to revisit some of the topics from our summer term, with our Year 7 and Year 9 students doing a mixture of rounders and cricket. Our Year 7 students learned a range of skills including batting, bowling and fielding throughout the first half term and began to apply these to competitive situations. Our Year 9 students revisited some of the skills mentioned above, but also focused on more tactical elements, as well as their knowledge of rules and ability to officiate.

Attention was given to new methods of training with our Year 8 cohort, where students have been burning off those lockdown calories and then linking topics which they have covered in science with PE, such as aerobic and anaerobic respiration.

Predictably, the weather in the second half of the term has been somewhat contrasting with our first half term, meaning we have moved into our more traditional winter activities. The oldest pupils have had their first experience of hockey, learning skills such as the Indian dribble, the push pass and the jab tackle! The Year 8s have started a unit on handball, building on last year's knowledge in order to apply more complex tactics into competitive situations. Last, but not least, our Year 7 students have been completing a unit on short tennis in the sports hall.

The spring term will hopefully bring more good news, and we are hoping to offer a more consistent and broad range of extracurricular clubs. With Year 7s having looked at short tennis, a tennis/badminton club is in the pipeline for those who enjoyed their introduction to racquet sports. Year 8s and 9s will also have a range of clubs to choose from, both during lunch and after school. Again, our curricular options will offer new and exciting activities for all of our students to learn!



SCIENCE

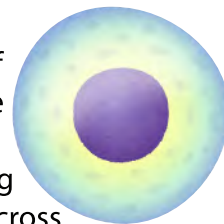
What a busy first term back we have had in the science department this academic year so far. It has been wonderful to welcome budding new scientists to the department and we have been delighted to see our older years back in action. We have been delighted to present the trophies won last year through the Odgen Partnership this term - and our Sciathalon winner trophy now proudly resides in the trophy cabinet! As part of the partnership, Year 9 students had the opportunity to watch an online session about carving their careers and are now finding out about other scientific jobs linked to the topic they are studying, which they may have not previously considered.

The
Ogden
Trust



Years 8 and 9 have both started the term learning about ecology and inheritance. Our young ecologists have learnt about how data collected from an environment can be interpreted and deciphered. They had hands-on experience in analysing samples and most particularly enjoyed the animal faeces dissection!

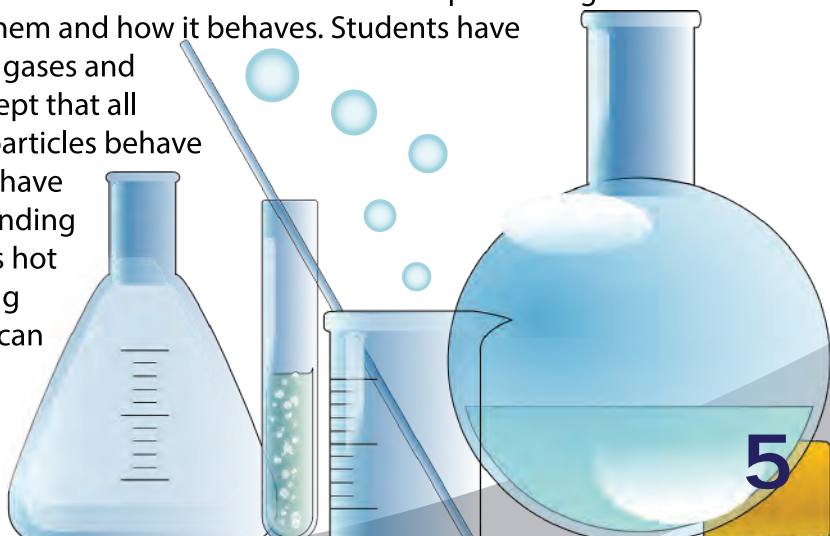
Our year 9 students have continued with their hands on learning approach whilst studying waves, building on prior knowledge learned in geography (we reminisced about the field work done on the beach in Year 7). Students have investigated both light and sound waves, modelled them using simple equipment and have learnt about the structure of both the ear and eye. Despite having to learn from home, students have still been able to access practical tasks using online simulations. Year 8 will have the opportunity to carry out similar tasks in the coming weeks. Now back in school, we have been learning about cells, particularly stem cells, and how we can use these for therapy and making cross curricular links with RE when discussing the ethical issues surrounding their use.



Years 7 and 8 have enjoyed learning about forces, building on their knowledge and understanding from primary school. Through this unit, students have been able to carry out multiple practical tasks where they have seen the results of forces acting upon a system after making predictions. Keen to develop key investigative skills, our science teachers have been keen to pose hinge questions which have made students think deeper and question their own rationales. Carrying out accurate practical work, students have investigated how the length of an elastic object is affected by the mass added. Students have finished the unit taking a tour through space and exploring the universe. This has sparked many discussions such as 'Is there any other life out there?'. Hopefully, we have inspired some to go searching for answers!



In the second half term, Year 7 studied the particle model. This abstract concept challenges students to think about the world around them and how it behaves. Students have studied the properties of solids, liquids and gases and developed their understanding of the concept that all matter is made of particles and that those particles behave differently in solids, liquids and gases. They have applied their new knowledge and understanding to help explain questions such as 'Why does hot water help tea to brew faster?' when learning about diffusion and 'Why can drawing pins can be pushed into wood without hurting our fingers?' when studying pressure.





Y7

The coastal winds that swept across the Armfield school yard this Autumn brought with them a flurry of poetic creativity from our students.

To celebrate this year's National Poetry Day, which took place on 1st October 2020, Armfield students joined thousands of others across the country in meditating on this year's theme of 'Vision'. With the buzz of competition in the air, our pupil body certainly rose to the challenge. They cooked up an impressive range of poems, which all ran with this year's theme in their own unique way. Our Year 7 pupils shone in particular, with a whopping 50 submissions! Well done to Year 7!

Thanks to our students' hard work and talent, the staff in Armfield's English Department were able to enjoy an afternoon judging their top-notch poems, accompanied by copious amounts of tea and chocolate Hob Knobs. It was a truly taxing decision to decide a winner from so many poignant contributions, but an arduous decision was made in the end.

The runners up were: Aliyah (7F) and Elizabeth (7D) for their poems 'Winter Walk' and 'The Northern Lights' respectively.

The ultimate winner was Bolda (7A) for her stunning and elegant poem titled 'As Free as a Bird'.

Not only did Bolda walk away from the competition with her Amazon voucher prize, but with the brand-new title of Armfield Academy's first ever Poet Laureate. Bolda has kindly agreed to help us celebrate major events in the school calendar by capturing them in verse. Her inaugural poem 'Christmas Feast' will be published in the winter edition of the Armfield Times, the student magazine.



Finally, as testimony to the talent displayed as a result of this competition, the Armfield English Department is creating an anthology of poems out of the best submissions, to be kept and accessed in our school library. Their legacy will set an example for future Armfield students, and we are certainly excited to witness our young bards flourish over the coming months and years.

**NATIONAL
POETRY
DAY 2020**

See It Like a Poet

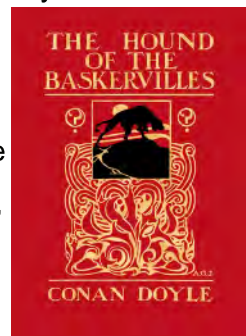
Year 8

We may have been in the midst of unprecedented times here at Armfield Academy, but our Year 8 pupils have shown sheer resilience and got their teeth stuck into some excellent English work over the past three months.

After our non-fiction scheme of work in the first term, themed on animal welfare, we moved onto descriptive writing. We've been using Arthur Conan Doyle's well-known character Sherlock Holmes and in particular 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' to inspire us to create some fantastic descriptive pieces crammed with adjectives, metaphors, personification and many more. The English department has thoroughly enjoyed reading the work that has been produced and our students have shown us just how imaginative and creative they can be in their descriptions.



One of our favourite pieces of work was the narrative maps for the abridged version of 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'. Despite this being a home learning task whilst the 'bubble' was isolating, this work really showcased many students' creative skills and allowed them to develop their summarising skills that they had started to employ back in the first half-term.



Finally, with Term 2 drawing to a close and the Christmas half-term approaching, the English department is looking forward to seeing the final pieces of work for the assessment. We wish Year 8 a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Year 9

'Give me a job!' was the metaphor to sum



up the first half-term in Year 9. Students focused on life literacy, persuasive writing and employment in their English lessons, where they were given the chance to experience a mock job process for the first time.

Using the theme of travel, our pupils meandered on a journey through the recruitment process, researching skills and characteristics required to work on one of the world's most luxurious trains – The Orient Express. Once equipped with all of the knowledge and understanding required to obtain employment, they responded to a job advert by completing a job application form before moving on to submitting a formal letter of intent. Throughout, the quality of their work demonstrated a strong awareness of how to promote themselves to prospective employers – most notably through their use of vocabulary.

After receiving mock letters inviting them to a job interview, our learners looked at the importance of open-ended questions and devised detailed answers, using reasoning, to respond effectively during their role play interviews. Working in pairs, they adopted the roles of employer and employee and asked each other questions to tease out reasons why they should be appointed to the role. Our pupils had examples, anecdotes and references within their armour, leading to many of their peers declaring 'You're Hired!'

It was clear that our Year 9s enjoyed this early taste of the adult world (something which is not as far away as they think!) and, in their 'pupil voice' scheme of work surveys, they said the topic had given them a fresh confidence and 'know-how' for when they apply for college places/jobs in 2023 and beyond...



September saw the return of our students at Armfield, and the start of many new experiences for Year 7 in particular: meeting new teachers, friends and becoming acclimatised to the secondary school environment – not to mention the Armfield chant, performed each morning, rain or shine, with gusto. As well as all this, many students had their first taste of studying an international language in the classroom.

At Armfield, secondary students have the opportunity to study French language and culture as part of their weekly curriculum. Year 7 have been learning to describe themselves, Year 8 have been exploring the topics of free time and technology and Year 9 have been developing their skills to describe aspects of teenage life in French. Alongside this, we have been embracing opportunities to promote the wider cultural elements of language learning.

For this reason, the MFL department ran a school-wide celebration of European Day of Languages (26th September). With a French café running for secondary students in the canteen, Armfield became a hive of cultural activity. Our nursery children enjoyed learning to count in Spanish with Dora and making Spanish flags. All primary children tasted croissants and pain-au-chocolat. Miss Linney delivered a cultural assembly to Year 8, and Year 9 participated in an extra-curricular home-baking challenge to create a European themed masterpiece. Year 9 also explored the value of learning a language à l'échelle mondiale in their French lessons, to begin the year with a strong message about the importance of their language studies.

For Year 7, European day of Languages saw the launch of a competition based on 'La Francophonie' - the group of nations across the world where French is a main spoken language. After an introductory session to the status and history of French as a global language, students were tasked with independently researching a Francophone country (other than France), and creating a project from their findings.

The results (some pictured) were extremely impressive, and a testament to the curiosity and diligence of our young pupils. Aside from the PowerPoint presentations, posters and leaflets which came flooding in during the fortnight after the project was set, many students went the extra mile by creating 3D projects out of canvas, scrapbooks and frames. One project even included an interactive pouch, containing miniature examples of Madagascan animals! Thanks to the students' ranging research, staff and pupils alike have learned a lot about the histories and cultures that comprise 'La Francophonie'.

As the winter break approaches, our curriculum has turned towards the different celebrations of Christmas in Francophone countries. Both Primary and Secondary took part in the Lingotot Christmas Festival on the 10th December. This exciting initiative allows children to develop their understanding of how Christmas is celebrated across the world. We look forward to learning more with our inspiring students as they progress in the new year.

