

# Newsletter

Issue 5: January—April 2014

Achieving Success Together

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Congleton High School

50  
Years

1964 - 2014

## NEW ERA FOR EDUCATION IN CONGLETON



Congleton  
Multi-Academy  
Trust is launched

# INTRODUCTION

CHS is celebrating a number of anniversaries this year: in the summer we are celebrating 50 years of there being a school on our Box Lane site; it is now 10 years since we became an Engineering School and 3 years since we became an Academy. We are proud to be celebrating these milestones, but these are times of rapid change in education in Congleton and we are not only looking back – we are looking forward to a future where we are a strong, resilient school that moves with the times and strives to continually improve outcomes for our young people.

In January, we received confirmation from the Government that we could form the Congleton Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT), with the aim of working more closely with other 'good' local schools to our mutual advantage. We are in discussion with a number of schools and I hope that by the time of our next newsletter, I will be able to report that at least one local primary school will have joined CMAT.

We are extremely proud to be a popular, high achieving school; this year we have had a record number of applications and in-year requests to join us and, despite increasing our Planned Admission Number from 180 to 200, we are now full and have a waiting list of students wanting to join us in September. But we are not complacent; we are working tirelessly to improve the facilities and opportunities for our students as well as enrich their whole experience of coming to school. For example, we have introduced a new minibus service that has opened up the possibility of after school activities to students who otherwise could not get home (see p4) and a breakfast club to ensure that all our students (and staff) can start the day with a free meal inside them and ready to learn.

I hope you will read and enjoy the many stories of student successes and efforts that are reported in the pages that follow. To keep up to date with what is happening in school during the term, please have a look at our website at [www.congletonhigh.com](http://www.congletonhigh.com), where you can also sign up for our monthly E-Newsletter.

Finally, I would like to make a polite request: at the start and end of the school day please could you respect our neighbour's needs and refrain from blocking access to their properties on Box Lane and the surrounding roads. By parking a little further away from school you can dramatically reduce the congestion and improve safety around our site. Thank you.

All that remains is for me to wish you a happy and relaxing Easter and I look forward to welcoming students and staff back to school on Tuesday 22 April ready for the summer term.

Mr D Hermitt, Executive Principal

## CONGLETON MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST IS LAUNCHED

On the 1st February 2014, CHS converted from a Single Academy Trust to a Multi-Academy Trust. The new Trust is known as "The Congleton Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT)" and is the largest and fastest growing Multi-Academy Trust in Congleton employing over 170 staff providing education to more than 1,000 students.

The CMAT provides support for 'good' Primary Schools to convert to Academies without having to establish individual trusts. All eligible local primary schools have been invited to join the Trust. The Trust has been established to provide mutual advantage for 'good' local schools to work more closely together.

Fiona Bruce MP, who has been involved with Congleton High School for many years, has agreed to become the patron of the Trust.

*"Congratulations on this pioneering step which will support young people in Congleton to flourish, make the most of their skills talents and abilities and achieve an even greater degree of success than they are achieving already."*

The Trust is led by David Hermitt, who is Chief Executive Officer and Executive Principal of Congleton High School. He said *"I am delighted that we are able to share our expertise as a well-established Academy with primary schools as they move to Academy status. Local primary schools are considering joining the Trust in April."*

Chair of the Trust, Richard Hinckley, who is a National Leader of Governance, said *"As the largest educational institution in the town, it is vital that we support primary schools by sharing our economies of scale. The new Trust allows 'good' schools to take mutual advantage of the benefits of Academy status. These are exciting times of rapid change."*

Chair of Finance, Geoff Eardley commented: *"I have been a governor at the school for over 35 years and this is a big step in the development of education in the town. We are able to share our financial acumen and ability to secure government grants with all schools in the CMAT. Our strong track record of financial management is a key reason why the Government has given us permission to form this Trust"*.

The launch of CMAT provides schools in Congleton with another way to join together to strengthen the educational provision in the town.





# CONGLETON HIGH IS 50!

## Join our celebrations on Friday 20th June 3:30pm—7pm

The first school on Box Lane in Congleton opened in October 1964 when the Boys Secondary Modern School moved here from its former premises on Waggs Road. This makes 2014 the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of there being a school on this site and we are planning a big party to celebrate!

We are extending an invitation to anyone who has been connected with the school over the last 50 years to join us on the afternoon of FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JUNE from 3:30pm until 7pm. There will be music from current and past students, stalls by local charities and community groups, stalls by local artisans, displays by police, fire and other emergency services, sports competitions and drama performances, not to mention a BBQ and a Hog Roast.

We would like to involve as many former students and staff as possible, so please pass the message on and put the date in your diary. It may even be that some of you reading this are former students yourselves and we really hope that you will come along and join in the fun. If you have any old photographs of the school or other memorabilia from your time here, please do get in touch.

Congleton High School

50  
Years

1964 - 2014

## HIGH ACHIEVERS

### High Achievers put forward their plans for a better Congleton

High Achieving Year 7 students at CHS have recently taken part in a competition looking at how to make Congleton a better place. Several students took part in the competition, submitting an excellent range of ideas and presentations, from posters to projects to film clips. The winning entries were chosen by Councillor George Hayes, Mayor of Congleton, who commented on how impressive the work was. 1st prize went to Jack Williams, 2nd prize to Arabella Holland and 3rd prize to Alex Lehm. High Achievers Co-ordinator, Jonathan Fryer, said *"We were very proud of the students, who came up with some incredible ideas. Well done to the winners and to all of the students who took part!"*

### High Achievers Art Workshop

Meanwhile, thirty two Year 9 students who have been identified as High Achievers in Art, had the opportunity to work with Ceramic's artist Amy Daniels. Students spent the day exploring new techniques, building cylindrical structures and decorating them with a whole range of different textures derived from natural objects. They worked in teams to complete their clay pieces, which will form a group sculptural piece to be displayed at the front of the school close to the new entrance. Mrs Vale, Curriculum Team Leader for Art said *"The Students thoroughly enjoyed working alongside a practicing artist; they produced some excellent work and I was very proud of their exemplary behaviour"* Artist Amy Daniels congratulated the students, saying *"They were a very talented group who were a pleasure to work with."*



## YEAR 7 ARRIVES AT SCHOOL IN STYLE



There was much excitement at CHS a few weeks ago when Year 7 student, Lizzie Corfield, arrived at school. Why? Well, Lizzie had won a competition with Silk FM to be driven to school in a 30ft stretch limo! She was collected from her home with her friends Ellie Shaw and Amy Rafferty by the Silk FM with 'Cheshire the Cat' and their arrival drew in a lot of interest from fellow students and staff.

Lizzie commented *'I was really excited to go in a limo again. It was really nice to bring my friends along with me and it was really cool to go to school in a limo instead of having a lift from my parents.'*

# PUTTING SAFETY FIRST WITH NEW MINIBUS SERVICE

CHS has recently moved into a new era in school transport, with the delivery of a new minibus, the third in our expanding fleet. Director of Finance & Operations, Julia Leonard, explained the rationale behind the decision to order a third minibus: *"With the increasing number of extra-curricular activities that we are able to offer our students, we found that we were spending a lot of money on hiring coaches to take small groups on educational visits or to sports fixtures and we realised that it would be more economical to have our own fleet of minibuses."*

The minibus is a 17 seat Mercedes-Benz Sprinter and is equipped with all the latest safety features, including predefined crumple zones, acceleration skid control and various other innovations to increase the vehicle's stability, traction and safety. Executive Principal, David Hermitt, explained: *"We want our young people to be as safe as possible when they are travelling home or on educational visits and this new minibus seemed to fit the bill. It is slightly heavier than alternative minibuses and comes fitted with seatbelts and all the latest safety features for which Mercedes-Benz is famous."*

The new minibus will be put to good use straight away, because we have started a new service for students wanting to stay behind after school for extra-curricular clubs or revision sessions; those that live further than walking distance from school will be entitled to a lift home at 4:30pm when the activity ends. Mr Hermitt explained: *"This service has opened up clubs and sports to students who previously would have had no means of getting home. They can now stay for the activity, book their place on the minibus and travel home in safety."* He added *"We are extremely grateful for the generous support of our Parents in Partnership group, whose fundraising has meant that they have been able to contribute £2,000 towards the cost of running this new minibus."*

Year 7 student Arabella Holland was enthusiastic about the service: *"It is great! I couldn't do after school clubs before because my parents couldn't pick me up when they finished, but now I have joined Media club, Art club, Drama club and I also stay for Netball."* Similarly, Gemma Bailey explained *"my mum works and so couldn't pick me up, but now I am able to stay for Art and Drama clubs"* and Rachel Bailey, who has also joined Art club added *"I am pleased because it has helped me improve my skills in art."*

The minibus service is proving extremely popular, as Steve Archer, one of the drivers explained: *"We have had positive feedback from both students and their parents and we are trying to expand the service for students doing after school revision sessions leading up to the exams in the summer."*



Drivers Kevin Willis (in cab) and Steve Archer with Mr Hermitt (centre), Mrs Leonard (right) and students Arabella, Jasmine, Gemma and Rachel

## YOUNG MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR



A number of students from CHS have recently taken part in the Rotary Young Musician of the Year competition, which began with local heats that were held in our own school hall back in February. Two students in particular, Katie Barlow and Eloise Smith, subsequently won the district final in Crewe and made it all the way to the North West Regional Final at Bolton School Arts Centre on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March. Katie is a very talented vocalist and Eloise an exceptional violinist and they both gave incredible performances in the regional final, but sadly didn't make it through to the national final later in the year.

Curriculum Team Leader for Music, Miss Blundred, explained that they were competing alongside other very talented musicians: *"We were extremely proud of our students for competing at such a high level. Both Katie and Eloise performed to the highest standard and they only missed out on winning by the smallest of margins."* She added *"It was a pleasure to listen to their performances and both students showed such maturity and confidence in dealing with the pressure."*

Speaking about the experience, Katie Barlow commented *"I am really glad I have been given the opportunity to challenge my performance skills. Being able to adapt to the different performance expectations has really helped me to up my game. Getting such positive feedback from the judges, who are professional musicians, is also extremely valuable."* Eloise Smith said: *"I have enjoyed representing Congleton*

*High School and the music department in the Rotary Young Musician of the Year competition. The competition was very tough this year so I am delighted to have won the instrumental category in the District heats and to have got as far as the Regional Final."*



# STUDENTS SECURE 74% A\*-C IN GCSE ENGLISH

Congleton High School's students have already achieved our best results for three years in English by taking the exams early in November. The class of 2014 are well on the way to securing the best results locally. An impressive performance of 74% A\*-C in the exam, which they sat six months early, confirms this. The girls are leading the way with 78%, closely followed by the boys on 69%, a gap which is very small compared to the national trends.

Staff are delighted that their teaching and encouragement has enabled students to produce such outstanding results. It is clear that this group are destined to exceed most of the GCSE records set by the class of 2011.

Executive Principal, Mr David Hermitt, said *"The vast majority of the 173 students in this year group have worked extremely hard to secure these passes, and they still have an opportunity to improve on these guaranteed results in August. English teachers have gone out of their way to provide a wealth of additional activities including breakfast clubs, revision days and after school sessions. Teachers of other subjects have also increased the focus on literacy skills in their lessons and suspended homework in the weeks leading up to the exam. The students have supported each other in class and with revision so that as a team they have performed extremely well. The impact of this team effort is that the boys have closed the gap on the girls to just 9%. The boys are all eager to make the gap in English even smaller in the summer."*

Chair of Governors, Mr Richard Hinckley, added *"Parents have every right to be proud of these achievements. Securing a higher pass in English is very important and can make a big difference in the world of work."*

Deputy Principal, Mr Barlow, explained *"123 students (72%) have already met the national standards for progress, with 40 exceeding it in English. All students have the chance to improve their results even further now that they have 'banked' these results. It seems clear that they will set numerous new school records by the time all the results are counted in August."*

Curriculum Team Leader for English, Sarah Dearnaley, also thanked staff for their support whilst students prepared for these exams. *"It really was a team effort. All staff helped support, encourage and motivate students and played a big part in getting the students to believe in themselves. Many of our students now really understand that hard work pays off and we hope that they will put the extra effort into all their subjects."*

On congratulating students, Assistant Principal, Mrs Taylor, said *"These students have been dedicated to their studies and deserve the success that they have gained. We have organised a special ten-pin bowling evening for them all to celebrate their success."*

Executive Principal, Mr Hermitt, said *"Our first priority in the November examinations was for our students to gain the best possible outcome in English. Having achieved their target grades, students will now shift their efforts to their other subjects. Mathematics has a long tradition of being a high performing subject at our academy because of our Engineering status and so students completed the Mathematics GCSE at the same time. Two thirds have secured a grade C or better with 15 students gaining A\*/A grades. As a result, 103 students (60%) have gained both English and Mathematics already."*



## KEEPING IN TOUCH

We are increasingly using e-mail as a method of communicating with parents as it is quick, efficient and cost-effective for the school. Please therefore make sure that we have your current e-mail address so that you do not miss out on important communications. As we start to embrace the new technology available to us, we also now have several other ways in which we can distribute information and news about what is happening in school or when students are out and about on educational visits. You can follow us on Twitter:

[@CongletonHS](#) — for general school news and announcements

[@PhysEdCHS](#) — for PE news and up-to-the minute information about fixtures etc

[@CHSHumanities](#) — curriculum-related tweets and information from Humanities trips

[@CHSLanguages](#) — Modern Foreign Languages twitter account

[@CHSMediaDept](#) — Updates, photos and news from our Media Department

[@CHS\\_Sixth\\_Form](#) — Updates, photos and news from Sixth Form CHS

[@CateringCHS](#) — tweets from CHS catering with details of our daily meal deals and menus



You can also sign up for our monthly E-Newsletter via the homepage of our website at [www.congletonhigh.com](http://www.congletonhigh.com)

# JOINT HONOURS PROGRAMME UPDATE



Students visiting Cambridge University

We are now seeing the results of the work that we have done together with Eaton Bank Academy over the last 18 months to ensure that young people from Congleton secure places at the most prestigious universities and on highly respected courses.

As part of the joint Honours Programme, students from both schools have joined together to access a wide range of opportunities, such as joint residential visits to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, attending conferences and master classes led by top lecturers and a day-long workshop on interview success.

Staff from both schools have been working together to give guidance and support to students to enable them to achieve their goals. One way they have done this

is to ensure that students are well prepared for their university interviews. Students from both schools continue to receive offers from the most highly-respected universities in the country to study a vast range of subjects, ranging from Biomedical Sciences to History and Spanish, and including such diverse courses as Law, Construction Management and Physiotherapy. We look forward to seeing the wonderful grades that Honours Programme students from both schools achieve in their A level examinations this summer to enable them to progress to such exciting opportunities at university.

In addition to this, we are delighted that every single student who left our Year 11 last summer is now in education or work-based training. Every year a NEET figure is published to show the number of students **Not in Education Employment or Training**. This year, the school achieved a figure of 0%. To put this into perspective, although national NEET figures for 2013 have not yet been published, the national figure for 2012 shows that 5.8% of 16 year olds were NEET, whilst the figure for Cheshire East as a whole was 5.6%. Director of Sixth Form, Wendy March, was delighted with the news *"Congleton High School has always achieved very low proportions of NEET but this year we have surpassed even our own previously excellent figures!"*

Executive Principal, Mr Hermitt, added *"Given the current economic climate, there is no doubt that gaining a foothold into a career is increasingly difficult. Nevertheless, Congleton High School works hard to ensure that our students develop the skills they will need. We are therefore particularly pleased that those students who do not continue into full-time education at age 16 are still progressing to jobs with training."*

## DID YOU KNOW.....?

### Breakfast club:

In addition to our minibus service to take students home following after-school activities (see story on page 4), we have also set up a Breakfast Club in school. From 8:20am every morning, any student or member of staff can get a hot drink and something to eat before the start of the school day.

### Progresso Parental Portal:

We have recently launched the Progresso Parental Portal, which gives all parents and carers with responsibility for children at the school access to be able to view and update details about their children.

ICT and MIS Manager, Denise Tarpey, said *"This is a really positive move forward which allows our parents to view up-to-date information on how their children are progressing and to be able to do it at a time which is convenient for them. We are keen to keep up with eco technology and the move to a paperless system is definitely the way to go."* Executive Principal, Mr Hermitt, added *"We are really pleased with how successful the launch has been, with quite a number of parents already accessing Progresso to view information about their child or children."*

If you have not received your login details or have any queries about the Progresso Parental Portal, please see the information in the Parent Area of our website or contact Denise Tarpey ([dtarpey@congletonhigh.com](mailto:dtarpey@congletonhigh.com)).

## PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP

Our dedicated Parents in Partnership committee provides opportunities for parents to support the school by assisting at school public events and, very importantly, by raising funds. We have been working hard over the past year to raise a substantial amount of money to improve facilities for our students. Our most recent acquisitions have been to purchase an Apple TV, sewing machine, PC's for Art, WWII memorabilia for History, books for English, new crockery for Catering and a payment towards the new school minibus.

New members are always welcome at the meetings—you can find the meeting dates on the [PIP page](#) in the Parent Area of the school website.

Please do come along and get involved.



# WORKING WITH OUR PARTNER PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Every term, we aim to provide support to our partner primary schools and we are pleased to have received additional funding this year from the Primary Science Teaching Trust, for the support we offer to in Maths, Science and DT (STEM subjects.) Throughout the year, our Maths teachers have delivered workshops to gifted Y6 students, promoting high level thinking skills, problem solving and investigational techniques as well as giving pupils the chance to work together with other gifted Mathematicians from local primary schools in a secondary school environment.

Last term, a number of Year 5 and 6 students from Astbury, Scholar Green, Woodcocks Well and Smallwood primary schools attended Young Engineers clubs with Mr Calogirou each Wednesday after school. Projects undertaken included construction of a maze and marble run (defying gravity), chocolate moulds and the chocolate to go in them (!) as well as construction of a downhill racer to see whose car was the fastest.

Mr Willis has been working with Scholar Green and Astbury to plan various DT projects which students will be undertaking over the coming term, including the construction of items to sell at the Astbury May Day and we have undertaken projects to support learning at both Daven and Black Firs Primary schools (see below).

## Daven Dragons



During February and March our Art department ran an arts project with Daven Primary School, which is one of our partner primary schools. Over the course of two workshops, students from years 4 and 5 were introduced to a range of mixed media and techniques with the aim of giving them the opportunity to experience materials that they wouldn't normally use. The results were fantastic, with students creating some imaginative and wonderful dragons. Art teacher, Miss Hanson commented *"The students had a brilliant time using ink, oil pastel and poste paint to produce an individual dragon on canvas. Some of them even added some extra sparkle with some gold paint and jewels!"* The dragons are now going to be proudly displayed at Daven Primary School, showing off the talents of some of Congleton's young artists.

## Black Firs reception class

Meanwhile, one of our science teachers, Miss Dixon, was recently invited to go to Black Firs Primary School to demonstrate a lung dissection to the Reception class there. The class had been learning all about the body and had learnt about the lungs and how we breathe. Miss Dixon was asked to demonstrate a dissection of a pair of pigs lungs.

Miss Dixon explained *"I chose pigs lungs because they are about the same size as human lungs and so the children could see how big our lungs are. They were able to see the airways and describe the tissue of the lungs. They were also able to touch the lungs and describe the texture of the tissue."*

As Reception class teacher, Mrs Hadfield, explained, it really helped to consolidate the children's learning because they could see first-hand what the lungs looked like: *"The idea of organs inside your body working away helping you breathe is very tricky to understand at four years old. After a week of making plastic lungs and watching a video of the respiratory process, by far the most memorable and valuable experience was with Miss Dixon. The children were fascinated and thoroughly enjoyed the 'hands on' experience, having to ask several times "are they really real?". They were also delighted that a "grown up" teacher from the "big school" had come to see them and felt very important for the rest of the day! Thank you once again to Miss Dixon for a fantastic experience."*



# CAREERS IN ENGINEERING

On 9th January, Chemical Engineer Suzy Firkin, came into school to talk to Year 11 and 12 Science students about a career in Engineering. She spoke to students about the interesting aspects of this challenging and wide ranging job, the possibilities of world travel, the surprisingly high starting salary and the opportunities available in this varied area of work.

Chemical engineers are involved in everything that is produced, from foods and fuels to medicines. Students learned how Smarties are made, how sugar cane is processed and how engineers in the drinks industry are using nanotechnology to fight counterfeiters.

As a specialist school of Engineering, we provide our students with many additional opportunities in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), both through the curriculum and in vocational learning and enrichment activities such as this.





# PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

## Year 13 students tells Princess Anne all about her school D&T project



Congratulations to sixth form student Megann Shufflebotham, who recently achieved the Grand Prior Award, the highest award that a cadet in the St John Ambulance Youth Programme can receive (similar to the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award). It is named after the Grand Prior of the Venerable Order of Saint John and to receive the award, Megann had to complete a total of 24 proficiencies such as first aid, crafts, media, photography, home skills, animal care and many others during her time in the cadets, each of which was evaluated by qualified assessors in the relevant field.

As a result of her commitment and outstanding work with the charity, Megann was invited to go to the Young Achievers' Reception at Buckingham Palace on 19<sup>th</sup> March, where she met and talked with HRH The Princess Royal, who is the Commandant in Chief (Youth) for St John Ambulance.

Princess Anne congratulated Megann on achieving her Grand Prior Award and asked about her future ambitions. Megann said *"I told her I want to be a product designer and explained that I have been making products using the 3D printers at school. I told her I had designed and made an electric toothbrush handle for children."* She added *"I was really nervous, but meeting Princess Anne was surreal and amazing. I found her really easy to talk to and down to earth."*



Top: Megann with St John Ambulance Cadet Leader, Sandra Hassal

Bottom: Megann (centre left) chats with Princess Anne

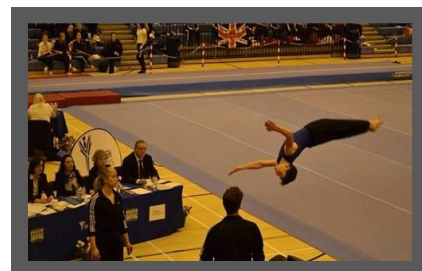
*Leaders in Congleton, Sandra Hassel and Della Bordley, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in cadets and it has helped to build my confidence. I have learned many disciplines and am proud that I have been able to help in the community."*

Megan has been part of the Congleton Cadets group for over 7 years. She has applied to go to the University of Derby to study Product Design and hopes to build a career in that field.

## Students reach British Schools Gymnastics Finals

Congratulations to students Oliver Dainty and Logan Clowes who recently competed in the North West Schools Tumbling Competition in Wigan. Both boys did extremely well and finished second in their age group; Oliver (Under 19's) and Logan (Under 15's). They will now compete in the National Schools Championships which are being held at Fenton Manor Sports Centre in May.

Tumbling is a form of gymnastics where 5 or 6 moves such as somersaults, rolls, and handsprings are performed without the use of specialized apparatus. It is practised down a track with a landing mat at the end. Both students practice at Crewe and Nantwich Gymnastics Club. Logan explained why he loves the sport *"I like tumbling as I know that I can hurt myself, but also do interesting moves and keep fit."* Oliver added *"It's thrilling doing somersaults and flips in the air but it also makes you dizzy. It's an exciting sport."*



## Congleton-based charity Circus Star praises student volunteer

We would like to recognise the hard work and achievements of Year 12 student Niamh Hogg, who has been volunteering with the charity Circus Starr, who put on free shows for vulnerable, disabled and disadvantaged children. Niamh has been helping the charity with its publicity and PR and gaining experience at the same time. Niamh explains *'Volunteering here has been very rewarding; and knowing that it is for a good cause, and will bring smiles to children's faces makes it all worthwhile. The hands-on experience and opportunity of working in an office have been really valuable for me.'*



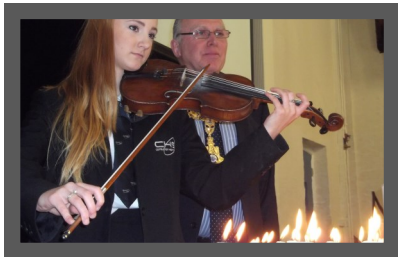
Neville Wilson, Director at Circus Starr adds *"Niamh settled in really quickly with the team at our Dane Mill Head Office in Congleton. She's been an absolute credit to herself and her school; punctual, capable, hardworking and always willing to undertake any task we give her! This has given her a good insight into Circus Starr's ethos as well as some practical and communication skills I hope she will find useful as she sets out on her chosen career."*

Finally, if you know of any student who has done something outstanding out of school, we would love the opportunity to recognise their efforts or celebrate their achievements in our newsletter. Please e-mail details to [principal@congletonhigh.com](mailto:principal@congletonhigh.com). Thank you.



# HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

Violinist and CHS student, Eloise Smith, was very proud to be asked to perform at a Holocaust Memorial Day Service recently. The Service of Remembrance, held by Cheshire East Council at the Town Hall in Sandbach, was to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, the date on which the Nazi's notorious Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated by Russian troops in 1945. Local Jewish people attended the service and everyone lit candles in remembrance. Year 10 student, Eloise, performed 'Remembrance' by John Williams on the violin. She was asked to take part in the service by Mike Benson the Mayor of Sandbach after he heard her play at another local event in the town. Eloise commented "The piece I played was used in the film *Schindler's List* and I played it with more emotion at the service because it made me think more and relate the piece to the Holocaust."



## STUDENTS' LEARNING ENHANCED OUT OF SCHOOL

At CHS we try to enhance and extend students' learning and experiences by organising as many educational visits as we can for students in all years. Here are details of just a few of the recent visits.

### An 'eye opening' trip back in time

2014 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of World War I and to mark this, a group of students and staff from CHS recently embarked on a visit to some of the most famous battlefield sites in France and Belgium.

They started in the area around Ypres in Belgium, where some of the fiercest fighting of the war occurred. The group visited war cemeteries including the largest British war cemetery at Tyne Cot where 12,000 soldiers are buried. In contrast, the students then moved on to Langemarck, a German war cemetery where the familiar white gravestones were replaced by simple black ones.

The second day focused on sites in France around the Somme battlefield. At the Canadian site at Vimy Ridge, students were able to tour some of the tunnels, which really gave them an insight into the fighting which took place below ground. At Beaumont-Hamel, where the Newfoundland Regiment was annihilated on the first day of the battle, students were even able to follow the soldiers' route across No-man's Land.

Curriculum Team Leader for Humanities, Mr Hickton, explained that both staff and students learned a lot from the visit: "We run this trip annually and it really is a great opportunity for students to gain a greater understanding of the history they have been learning in the classroom. This year the trip enjoyed unseasonably warm and fine weather, which gave students the time to explore sites in greater depth."



### Students empowered at inaugural We Day UK



12 of our Year 9 students were very proud recently to attend the exclusive and inaugural 'We Day' at Wembley Arena in London. The students earned their invitations as a result of the work they have been doing with the charity *Free the Children* on projects both locally and internationally.

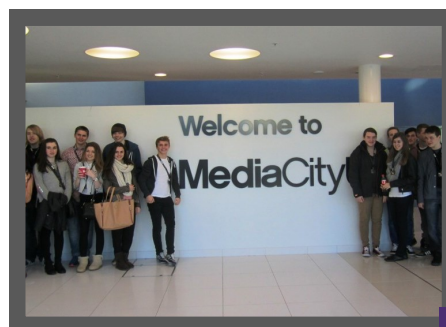
The students joined almost 12,000 of their peers from around the UK to listen to a wide range of motivational speakers as well as musical and dance performances. Speakers and performers at the event included Prince Harry, Sir Richard Branson, former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, Clive Owen, Ellie Goulding, Dizzee Rascal, Diversity, Jennifer Hudson, Paralympian Martine Wright. Our students will be doing two things: running a 'We Create change' campaign, where they will be raising funds to help fund the construction of schools in South Africa. Then the 12 students who attended We Day will be doing 'We Are Silent', a day of sponsored silence in support of children being bullied or exploited in the world. Speaking about the experience, student Chloe Tatton said "It was inspiring; people who we look up to said that they believe in us!" Olivia Roberts added "It was fantastic because we saw that a lot of young people had changed the world."

### Media Studies students visit BBC's Media City

All students who take Media Studies took a trip to Media City recently and went on an interactive tour of the BBC studios. Students were able to explore the working studios of: BBC 6Music, Blue Peter and BBC Breakfast and were given the opportunity to present the weather and read the news using real teleprompter (autocue) and interview BBC employees.

Students benefitted hugely through exploring the studios and speaking to employees in person. The whole experience enabled them to get a solid understanding of the workings of the institution and its core values.

Media teacher Miss Eardley commented that "I think it's crucial for the students to get hands on experience and to get advice from someone working in the industry. It was a hugely exciting experience, which was enjoyed by all."



## CHS achieves School Games Gold Award



We are delighted that we have achieved the School Games Gold Award in recognition of our outstanding provision for School Sport. The last academic year was hugely successful for sport here and, as Mrs Salt, Curriculum Team Leader for PE, explained, this only looks like getting even better: *"With more sports clubs and more competitions than ever before School Sport is really thriving. Students have excelled*

*themselves, not only with competitive success but also in the increasing numbers of students participating in school sport and actively leading and volunteering both at CHS and in local primary schools."*

We have an extensive range of activities on offer for students and an excellent reputation for competition in Level 2 (inter-school) and Level 3 (County/area Games Festival) school games events. The Gold kite-mark also considers the school-club links established by the department, support for Gifted & Talented students and promotion of School Games through our Website, Twitter, Sports Blog and in the local press.

Executive Principal, Mr Hermitt, congratulated staff and students, saying *"The Gold kite-mark is the pinnacle of sports awards and recognises schools who are willing to go the extra mile. We are extremely proud of this excellent achievement."*

CHS students recently competed in a Level 3 School Games competition at Chester University. They competed in indoor rowing and did extremely well, including individual medals for Hollie Massey (Gold) and Johnnie Adderley (Bronze) and placements in the team events.

## Students get to ski in near perfect conditions

Following on from the success of last year's trip, students on the much anticipated Ski Training Course set off in the early hours of Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January heading for the resort of Alpe D'Huez in the French Alps. The 34 eager students were excited to hit the slopes on Sunday morning for 6 days of skiing in one of the best resorts in France.



As PE Teacher, Mr Naylor, explains, they all had a fantastic time: *"The week was a roaring success with all students making great improvements with their ski ability. One of the highlights had to be the fantastic weather on the last day allowing students to make their way up to Pic*

*Blanc at 3300m to take in the breathtaking views and to ski the perfect conditions on the glacier."* He added *"We are already preparing for the 2015 course, again travelling to France but this time to the resort of Le Corbier."*

## Whole school gets involved in Table Tennis Tournament

One unique sporting event—the CHS table tennis tournament—has also been taking place during this term. It has been incredibly popular with both staff and students as one of the organisers, ICT Technician, Mr M Naylor, explained: *"The all-comers aspect makes it something of a unique event in the school calendar; student representation from every year group coupled with both teaching and support staff made for some great match-ups all the way through the competition."*

Over 100 staff and students entered the tournament, and games were played during every available lunch break. It proved to be a great way to bring staff and students together to have a bit of fun (and some healthy competition) outside the classroom. James Hodgetts (11AWT) and Mr M Naylor were the losing semi-finalists. James Garside (10CC) was the winner, beating Mr de Souza in an exciting final.



Curriculum Team Leader for PE Mrs Salt (R) and Deputy CTL Mr Cross (L) with Edward Simpson MP for Crewe & Nantwich (Centre) and students Brian & George



## Basketball Boom at CHS

Not traditionally a big school sport, interest in Basketball is on the increase at CHS. Such has been the interest and commitment from students and staff over the last few years that our under-16 basketball team have been crowned South Cheshire Champions. The team, run and coached by Executive Principal, Mr Hermitt, came back from the competition at Brine Leas School, victorious and unbeaten.

PE Teacher Mr De Souza commented *"The team had all been to watch the British Basketball League Cup Final in Birmingham on the previous Sunday and so they were obviously very motivated to succeed in this competition."*

Executive Principal, Mr Hermitt, was naturally proud of his team, *"They produced some fantastic individual performances, especially from debutant Danny Iyoha, but it was the all-round team effort that really brought the trophy back to Congleton High."* He added *"Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our PE staff we now have a tremendous number of students attending all of our extra-curricular sports clubs. The students are very committed to their sports and want to do well and this is reflected in their enjoyment and success in different competitions."*



## ESFA Semi-Final Under 15 Girls

An incredible 350 people packed into the stands at Congleton Town Football Club last Wednesday evening to watch Congleton High School's under 15 girls football team go head-to-head with St. Bede's Roman Catholic High School from Blackburn in the semi-final of the English Schools Football Association (ESFA) Playstation Schools' Cup. This is a national competition and the team were delighted to have reached the last 4 out of a total of 263 schools that entered.

St Bede's took the lead after just 7 minutes, adding to their tally of 58 goals so far in the competition. Despite the persistent rain, the support for the CHS team was incredible as fellow students and parents spurred the team on and by half time the score was 1-1. In the second half, despite some great saves by CHS goal keeper, Lydia Bennett, and a thunderous strike by team captain, Hollie Massey, St Bede's proved the stronger team, and the game finished 3-2 to St Bede's.



Executive Principal, Mr Hermitt watched the game along with hundreds of CHS students and staff *"We are very proud of the team and all that they have achieved. Their performance and the support they have received from fellow students and staff is a perfect example of 'Achieving Success Together', which is our school motto."* Hollie Massey, who plays for both England and Manchester United, agreed that it is how the team work together that is key to their success *"We all bond with each other and that is what makes our team so successful and so special."*

## Indoor Rowing Success

Staff in Congleton High School's PE department have gradually been broadening and extending the number of sports in which students can participate. The Academy has its own fitness suite and so students have been able to train on their indoor rowing machines. The Academy took three of its indoor rowing teams to Chester University recently to take part in a Level 3 (county-wide) School Games competition.

Curriculum Team Leader for PE, Mrs Salt, said *"We are extremely fortunate to have such great facilities for sport at Congleton High and having our own fitness suite alongside our sports centre, gym and extensive playing fields means that students can learn new sports and train for competitions."* She added *"Our students performed extremely well. In the individual events, Hollie Massey (Year 9) won gold and Johnnie Adderley (Year 9) won the bronze medal."* In the team events, the Year 9 girls finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place, Year 9 boys in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and Year 10 boys in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The Level 3 School Games competition involves students from across Cheshire leading and performing in a variety of sports.



## Primary School Sports Hall Athletics at CHS

In sport, CHS recently hosted another successful Sports Hall Athletics competition for local primary schools. Students from five local primary schools took part, with Black Firs eventually winning the whole competition. The event was run by Sports Hall Athletics legend Keith Hancock and was officiated by our Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students. PE Teacher Mr De Souza commented *"It was a fantastic evening of sport, with a very high standard of competition. Black Firs were out and out winners"*

# CELEBRATING HARD WORK AND SUCCESS

This term has seen us celebrate with students who took their A-Levels and GCSEs last summer in two major Awards Evenings.

## A-Level Awards Evening

On 7 January, we welcomed back former A-Level students to receive their A-Level certificates and prizes given to recognise their achievements and efforts in their subjects as well as their contributions to school life when they were here. This was the cohort of students who achieved the best results that the academy has ever had, with 16% of all grades achieved being A\*. This meant that even more prizes than usual were given out to the very many students who had enjoyed academic success.

Speaker for the evening was Dr Sarah Band, herself a former student, and she spoke about what she had done since leaving CHS in 2008. Director of Sixth Form, Wendy March, said *"Sarah left us to train to be a doctor. It was particularly inspiring to hear her account of time she spent treating children in Uganda and the impact that this has had on her."*

Also in attendance at the event were Congleton Town Mayor, Councillor George Hayes, Mr Steve Hodgkinson, Church Leader at New Life Church and School Governor Mrs Fiona Hampton.

## GCSE Awards Evening

Then on 23 January, more than 250 students, parents, staff, governors and guests packed into the hall to celebrate the hard work and success of students who took their GCSE examinations last summer.

Mr Hermitt began the evening by congratulating students on their record breaking academic performance. *"The class of 2013 set new school records with 98% securing 5 good GCSEs which was the best in Cheshire for comprehensive schools. They also secured new school records for adding value, amongst the best in the North West."*

Guest of honour was Steve Hodgkinson, Church Leader from the New Life Church in Congleton, who gave an inspiring speech to the students about the importance of making wise choices in life; in friendships and relationships, in their career and, most importantly, in their attitude. *"Choose to be a team player"* he urged them *"and choose to make the world a better place to live."*

In addition to rewarding academic success, there were awards for special categories sponsored by local businesses and partners of the school, such as Pecks Restaurant, New Life Church, Macclesfield College and South Cheshire College. Students also received prizes for Contribution to Performing Arts and Outstanding Contribution to School Life. Helping to present the awards alongside Mr Hodgkinson were Richard Hinckley, Chair of Governors and Andy Pear, Governor and owner of Pecks Restaurant.



## Key Dates for your diary

Tuesday 22nd April 2014	School re-opens
Thursday 24th April 2014	Year 10 Parents' Evening
Monday 28th April 2014	PIP Meeting (7pm)
Wednesday 30th April 2014	Fashion Show
Monday 5th May 2014	May Day Bank Holiday—School closed
Monday 26th—Friday 30th May	Half Term holiday
Wednesday 4th June 2014	PIP Meeting (7pm)
Friday 20th June 2014	50th Anniversary Celebrations (3:30pm—7pm)
Tuesday 24th June 2014	Sports Day
Wednesday 25th June 2014	New Intake Day/Evening
Wednesday 2nd July 2014	Sports Awards Evening
Wednesday 9th—Friday 11th July 2014	Summer show
Friday 18th July 2014	Last day of term