



Newsletter



December 2023

Making the leap: the world of P16

On November 16th, we welcomed a large number of our existing Year 11 students, as well as interested prospective applicants from other local schools, to our Post 16 Open Evening, for students making the transition in September 2024.

Throughout the evening, each department showcased the courses available – a staggering 30 distinct courses! We take great pride in providing both A Level and vocational courses, giving our students a wide range of subject options to customise their education to their desired career route.

Mr Briggs and members of our Senior Student Leaders - Rachel and Iona - gave a talk in the main hall during the evening. And, to promote the benefits of P16 life, a huge number of our current Year 12 and Year 13 students assisted in departments, speaking with parents and potential students about their personal experiences, and providing tours.

If you missed our Post 16 Open Evening, but want to learn more, please visit our school website - queensmeadschool.org.uk - where you can find lots of information in the Post 16 area and you can also access our September 2024 course information leaflet.

Aamir, Demi, Des'Ree, Iona, Keira, Rachel, Saif,
the Student Leadership Group



Our P16 suite

Nurturing our mental health

As Year 10 enter Key Stage 4, and embark upon their GCSEs, we wanted them to be able to take care of themselves, both physically and mentally. With regard to this, on Tuesday 21st November, the year group took part in a session run by Solent Mind, with 'Theatre for Life', to provide them with advice on how to support their mental health, something which is too often overlooked in today's busy world. Solent Mind's vision is 'for a world where everyone experiencing a mental health issue receives support and respect' and they visit schools across the UK, promoting this idea.

To start with, students watched an engaging drama performance, where the team portrayed characters battling a variety of mental health issues - they dramatised the very real and widespread impacts such problems can have. It was an interactive performance, and students were able to join in with some of the activities, to help tackle these issues.



After watching the drama performance, the students broke into smaller groups to attend a workshop which delved further into mental health challenges and their impacts. The students were given the opportunity to discuss and share their thoughts on the performance they had watched with one member of the Solent Mind team and were able to voice any of their own concerns towards their own lives at school.

Following this open discussion, the team member lead the students through meditation exercises to support students in finding ways to relax and stay positive during moments of stress and anxiety. Our students really enjoyed the session, and learnt a lot of valuable information that they will be able to use to support them! Hopefully, they will be able to make use of the strategies.

Mrs Bamrah, *Teacher of English*



From the screen to the stage: the magic of Disney!

On 29th November, a group of Year 11 students had the amazing opportunity to attend the theatre, to watch the West End production of 'The Lion King'. It was incredible to witness such a famous film and story coming to life on stage, and being in the heart of our capital city only added to the experience to create a lively atmosphere.

'The Lion King' musical itself was absolutely incredible! The effort that was put into the costumes, the set, the props and the music was truly something spectacular. The actors were super! And, like the film, it was an emotional rollercoaster - it made me laugh and even shed a tear in some moments.

The musical was interesting and insightful, helping me learn more about the culture that is portrayed in 'The Lion King'; it also made me appreciate the movie more because seeing it come to life made it much more thrilling and exciting. It was a great experience for me and all my peers, and has now become one of my favourite musicals that I have seen!



We all had such an amazing time and we are so grateful we were able to experience seeing a theatre production in the West End. I would definitely recommend the show for all theatre-lovers!

I want to say a huge thank you to our teachers for organising the trip!

Agne S, Year 11 student



The battle of creativity continues...

Queensmead's Lego club battles are becoming more and more challenging as the weeks and the terms go by. The students' skills are getting better and better as they practice working together and also competing against one another. This term, we have had some fantastic builds - we have shared just a sample with you below.

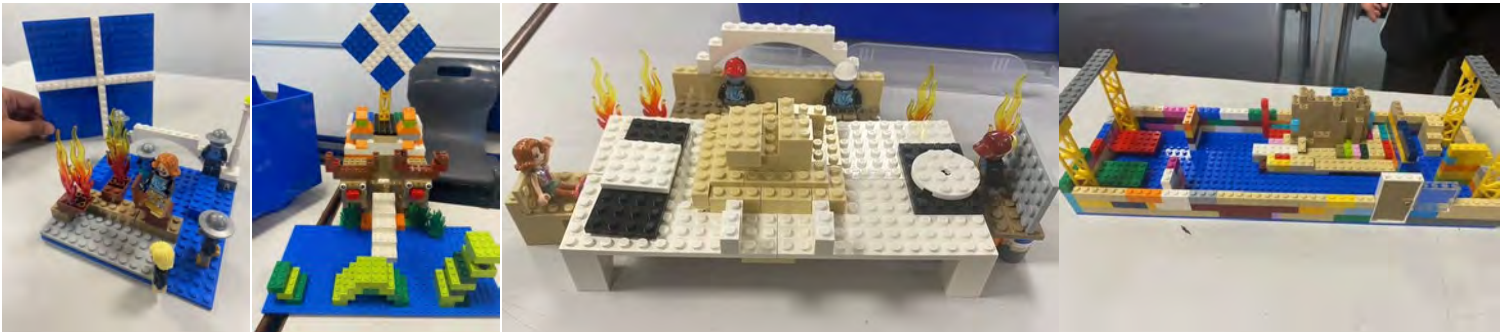
Ms Morrissey, *Teacher of Maths*

St Andrew's Day

This week, students celebrated Scottish Independence Day. Lots of blue and white filled the room, to replicate the flag but the builds also depicted key events of the historic day!

American Thanksgiving

This week's creations celebrated another holiday. Thanksgiving is a crucial time to share with family and friends. As with all celebrations, family and friends sit down together to eat lots of yummy and delicious food, which our Lego builders mimicked in their builds.



Christmas!

As the year draws to a close, that only means one thing... it's Christmas time!

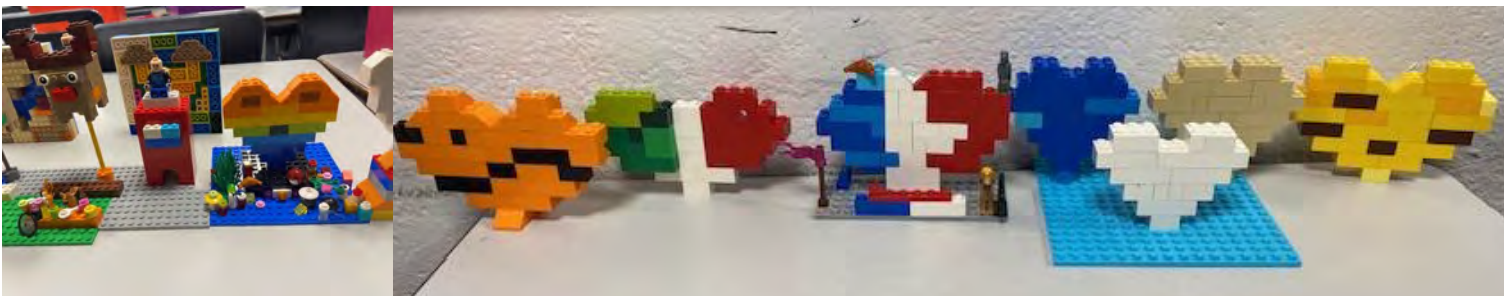
Our creative minds did not fail to create some epic builds to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year.



#BuildtoGive

Lego have been sharing the love through bricks this year and our builders got in on the action.

For every heart created and sharing using the hashtag, Lego will give a set to a child in need this Christmas season!



Raising Christmas spirits: extra-curricular clubs

At Queensmead School we believe in creating opportunities beyond the curriculum for our students. Whilst we are proud of our examination results, we know that those alone do not make for a well-rounded student. Extra-curricular activities not only allow students to have fun and learn new skills, but they can also help them to develop friendships and life skills relevant to their future careers.

For our older students, in particular, extra-curricular activities are highly valued by potential employers, colleges and universities. But, above all, they offer an important space to have fun and relax.

For December, the school ran a competition to encourage attendance at the plethora of clubs on offer - called 'The 12 days of Christmas', students were encouraged to attend as many extra-curricular clubs as possible, in the first 12 school days of the month.

We have awarded prizes to each year group for the following:

- The top two students in each year group - the two that have attended the most clubs since the start of this school year.
- The top three students in each year group - the three students who attended the most clubs from December 1st - 16th.

To find out about the clubs running for each year group, contact your form tutor or check out the list of clubs available on the school website.



The winners will be revealed in the next edition!

Mr Fernandes, Head of PE and ECA coordinator



Delving into London's dark and dangerous history...

On Wednesday 15th November, thirty Year 10 students travelled to Whitechapel in East London, to participate in one of the thrilling and legendary history tours around Whitechapel - to get an insight into the dark and dangerous history of the streets of London where the infamous Jack the Ripper's victims were found.

We met our tour guide at Tower Hill, who took us to the places where the Ripper's victims met their gruesome deaths. Our guide explained what life in Whitechapel was like, in the dark and dreary autumn of 1888, to help us imagine the struggles and emotions that the public must have been going through.

Everyone found the tour really interesting and gained valuable knowledge to help support them in the study of GCSE history, which includes a study of a unit of work about Whitechapel.



This trip has become quite the annual event, and, as usual, the tour itself was thrilling!

All of the students behaved impeccably and were a real credit to our school - they were very appreciative of the opportunity they had to venture through history.

Thank you to all who attended and I look forward to organising this again!

Mrs Oakley, Senior Cover Supervisor

Queensmead's royal tribute to the late Queen

In the summer of 2023, the Woodland Trust donated a selection of free trees to plant within our school grounds, for all our students and staff to enjoy both now and in the years to come.

With the recent passing of HRH Queen Elizabeth II, we really wanted to do something as a school to commemorate her incredible reign and to celebrate her life. As a memorial for her, we decided to plant some of these trees in the Quiet Green area of our school, which is used by students and staff alike at break times each day.

We commissioned a plaque to be engraved in her Majesty's memory, and the Design Technology department created a wooden base to mount it on. The plaque is nestled amongst the trees we planted, in what we felt was a fitting memorial to our late Queen.



The Year 9 students were incredibly proud of their memorial, so we wrote to Buckingham Palace to let them know what we had done, with a photo of our students alongside the trees and the commemorative plaque.

In November, we received a heartfelt letter from the new King, thanking us for our tribute and sending his best wishes to all students and staff at Queensmead School.

The memorial is now a daily reminder of all of our contribution to our late Queen's memory. We believe the service she provided to this country should be valued and celebrated.

Mrs Oakley, *Senior Cover Supervisor*



The delicious and fascinating world of chocolate...

On the 11th December, a group of fifty Year 8 students visited Cadbury's World in Birmingham. When we got to the factory, we were given a tour and 3 - yes, 3! - bars of chocolate (each). It was safe to say, the tour got off to a great start.

We learnt all about the factory's history and origin, how they make the chocolate and saw a chocolate making demonstration. Of course, the best part was being able to taste the yummy chocolate with our own choices of toppings. There was also a 4D cinema experience, which was superb, and we could browse Cadbury's chocolate and accompanying merchandise in their official shop.

Alongside all the chocolatey excitement, we could apply what we learned to make links to geography topics like globalisation. For example, one chocolate bar represents many parts of the primary, secondary and economic sectors. The trip was an amazing experience and I (as I'm sure many others did) really enjoyed the day out.



And who would say they didn't enjoy the free chocolate!? I would like to say a massive thank you to the teachers for organising this wonderful trip, on behalf of all the students who were invited!

Louis A, Year 8 student

Learning about history through musical theatre

Students from Year 11 and 13 with a passion for the world of Performing Arts had the opportunity to see 'Hamilton' live at the Victoria Palace Theatre.

A hit musical, 'Hamilton' follows the titular main character of Alexander Hamilton from life to death, featuring all the key figures in his life. It focuses on America's fight for freedom against the British, and illuminates the more personal aspects of his life and his political endeavours.

The performance was amazing - from the incredible actors, to the sound, music and the set design. It was incredible to see some of my favourite characters - Eliza, Angelica, Hamilton and King George III - come to life on stage in front of us. Especially the King, who was getting laughs every time he showed up on stage.



For the Year 13s in particular, it was an excellent opportunity to see the superbly talented actor, playwright and filmmaker Lin Manuel Miranda in action. We are studying Hamilton for our exam and although we have seen a recorded version, it was amazing to have a chance to go see it live on stage. For the GCSE students, being able to see a live performance is a great learning opportunity for their course, and for both year groups, it was a lovely treat to enjoy at the end of a long winter term and a distraction from the exams and coursework. The theatre trip helped us destress and relax before the January mocks begin...

Overall Hamilton is an amazing production and a great experience to see live. It was a thrilling experience to watch, truly bringing historical events to life. Although watching the recorded version on TV is great, allow me to say one thing about watching Hamilton on stage: it's always better to "be in the room where it happens"!

Adam M, Year 13 student

December 2023

Raising Christmas Spirits: an evening of music

On a rather cold and dreary evening on Tuesday 12th December, the Performing Arts' department was delighted to invite students, family and friends to their lively 'Winter Christmas Concert'. There was no better way to warm everyone up and offer some festive cheer than through some amazing musical performances.

The concert allowed students from across all Key Stages to unite in a showcase of talent, offering superb renditions of some of our favourite Christmas songs, amongst other favourites from across the genres. They all performed brilliantly, in a wide range of styles and with various instruments. We were particularly impressed by the contributions of some of our youngest students from year 7; as it was their first year, it was amazing to be able to nurture some outstanding talent from our new cohort - hopefully, they will continue to flourish in future concerts to come. Despite being new to the school and still finding their feet, their confidence shone through their wonderful performances.

We are so grateful to all the parents, staff and students who came to support the performers, and there was a great turnout. We look forward to running the same event again next year for everyone to enjoy!



Coming up...

The Performing Arts department is always ready for the next thing! We have been delighted to see so many talented students audition to take part in our upcoming production of 'Matilda', which will take place in the latter part of the summer term.

We look forward to beginning the rehearsal process in January and the lead up to the final performances, and we look forward to seeing you there! Good luck everyone and break a leg!

Mr Taylor, *Head of Performing Arts*



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A flurry of glitter: the annual Post 16 Winter Ball

The Student Leadership Group is always working hard to provide unique experiences for our Post 16 students: we love to plan and host events through the school year, to celebrate our achievements and to support good causes. This year, this includes running the Poppy Appeal, hosting the Winter Ball, running a Quiz Night and organising Culture Day, all of which are almost entirely student-led, helping to cultivate a strong sense of community and unity for our Post 16 students.

Such events are a relief for many in stressful times, where we will be making memories which we will happily look back on in the future. The planning of the Winter Ball began right at the beginning of September - when the Student leadership group was first formed. This included deciding the theme of decorations, food options and entertainment. Also, the Values Team has been an invaluable support to the SLG, assisting in setting up and completing delegated tasks when needed. We couldn't have done it without them!

The Winter Ball took place on Wednesday 20th December and a fantastic night was had by all, sending us all into the holiday season feeling positive and festive. The evening began with some live music from P16 students, followed by a DJ, playing a great set.

Everyone seemed to have a great time dancing, socialising and making great use of the photo booth.

What a way to celebrate the end of the term!



We have also managed to raise a significant sum for the Poppy Appeal, this year. Thanks to all, for their contributions.



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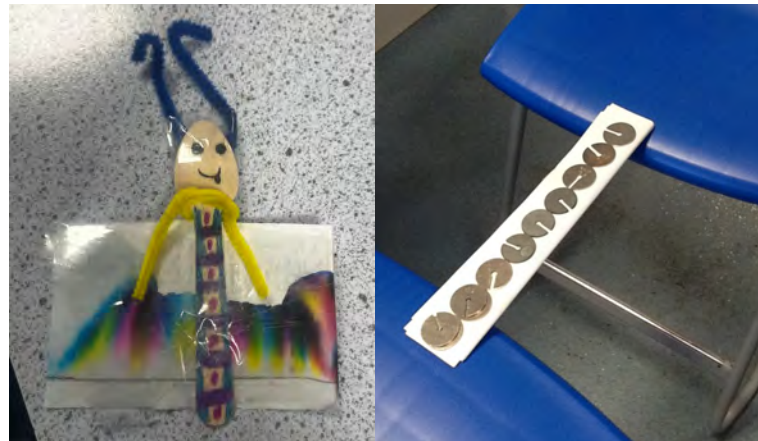
Our Outreach programme - Welcome to the world of STEM

Queensmead School recently played host to a series of after-school sessions, welcoming eager students from Deansfield Primary. Over the course of ten sessions, these budding scientists were able to experience a diverse range of experiments, showcasing the marvels of science through practical applications. From using crafting glue (amongst other everyday household materials), to catching a mystery killer using ink chromatography, the students embraced the opportunity to engage with science beyond a textbook.

One highlight of the program was the construction of bridges, where students put their engineering skills to the test. The practical experience not only sparked creativity but also instilled a deeper understanding of structural principles. Witnessing the bridges withstand various challenges was a testament to the power of learning through experimentation, and the students' progress!

The collaborative initiative between Queensmead School and Deansfield Primary not only provided a platform for scientific exploration but also fostered a sense of curiosity and teamwork among the participants. As the sessions concluded, the students left with newfound knowledge and passion towards STEM subjects.

Queensmead School hopes to build upon the successful collaboration that we have have had so far. We are keen to continue to offer enriching experiences that extend beyond the classroom, preparing students for a future where their scientific curiosity knows no bounds.



Curriculum update: What are our students learning?

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, it is vitally important to teach students to become informed, positive citizens in their community, alongside their academic studies. As such, we teach a programme of Personal Development (PD) lessons.

Our Personal Development curriculum is designed to cover all aspects of the national curriculum for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education, but we also supplement it with topics that are critical for the wider development and understanding of our students. We can also respond to current events, to engage our students in international and national affairs. All topics are carefully planned to be age appropriate and are delivered sensitively by highly trained teaching staff. Since November, these are some of the topics we have covered:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Types of bullying	Effects of smoking	Adaptability	CV writing skills	The issues with vaping
Cyber bullying	Effects of alcohol	Career ambitions	Interview skills	Study skills
Respect for others and challenging discrimination	Effects of drugs	Sexual harassment & sexual bullying	Budgeting and money skills	Reporting abuse

Our Post 16 students continue to follow a PD curriculum as part of their studies, and the content is tailored appropriately for their journey. This year, they have focused on the topic of consent; issues with, and strategies to manage online sexual harassment; and also strategies for managing more general risky situations. For the term ahead, Post 16 will consider ways to challenge prejudice and discrimination; how to live in a diverse society; and, finally, extremism and radicalisation.

Over the next half term students will study the following:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Aspirations	Using social media responsibly	Healthy family relationships	Consent and coercion	Law and justice: human rights
Careers	Online safety	Forming healthy relationships	The impact of pornography	How national government works
Self-confidence	Cyber crime	Conflict resolution: families and friends	Sexual assault and harassment	How local government works

