



Newsletter



December 2021

Building towards better lessons

Recent research suggests that learning is more effective in a room with walls that are simple and colourless, with large windows allowing an abundance of natural light to fall into the room, with a plentiful supply of fresh air, and high ceilings.

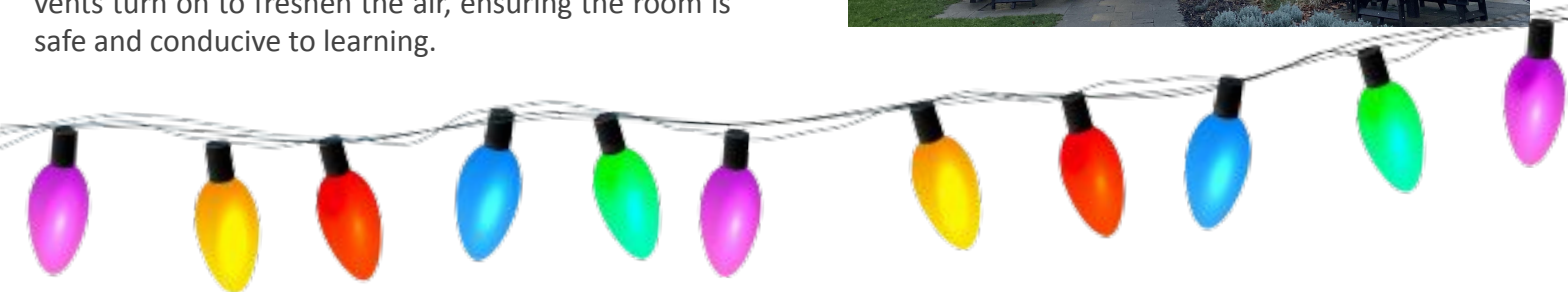
And this is exactly what our new school building delivers!

I am one of the lucky teachers to have a teaching room in this building, and I have seen the positive effects first hand. My classroom is on the top floor and, as soon as I get in, I pull up the blinds to let the light in, making the room bright and airy. As it is rather chilly outside at the moment, I don't always want to open the windows, but the new building is fitted with CO2 monitors which automatically check the levels in the room, and, if it's too high, the air vents turn on to freshen the air, ensuring the room is safe and conducive to learning.

With high ceilings, the rooms are also big and spacious, and, as we always aim to keep classes small to maximise learning, the rooms feel luxuriously roomy. Not to mention the soundproofing! It really makes a difference as we tend to teach with the doors open, so it keeps the distractions to an absolute minimum.

Many of the students have been excited to know their English lessons will be in this building, and they comment on how clean, spacious, and bright it is every time they come in. So, it was well worth the wait and it will be a very positive addition to our school.

Ms Osman, Lead Teacher and Teacher of English



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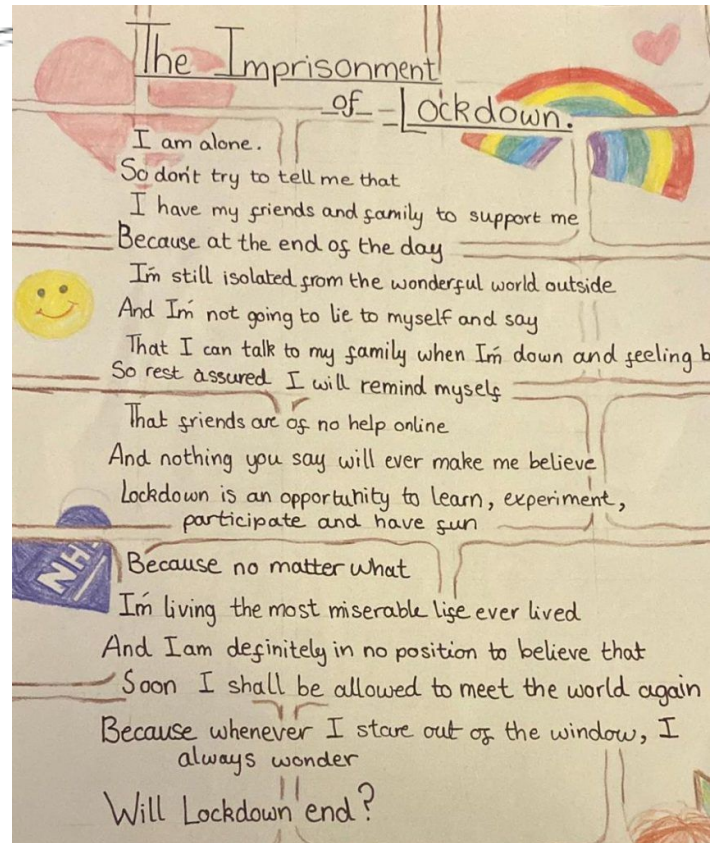


Queensmead Reads

At Queensmead, we put literacy at the heart of our curriculum and we encourage students to read as often, and as widely, as possible. Research suggests that reading regularly enhances learning in every subject, and we are certainly going to embrace this!

Students start the day with teacher-led reading during form time, sharing a class novel, and using it as a springboard for discussion. In addition, our sixth form students support younger students with their reading, listening and modelling good reading, to build confidence and skill.

We've also recently initiated regular DEAR (drop everything and read) sessions, encouraging everyone to 'drop everything and read' for 20 minutes, with both students and staff taking a short break from work to share their love of reading and allowing us,



Above, an amazing example of a reverse poem, by Mahjabeen, the winning entry for one of our literacy competitions. Read it BOTH ways!

Below left, Vincent (Year 7), the first recipient of a book from the vending machine and an enthusiastic reader!

as a community, to take a moment from our busy lives and lose ourselves in a book. DEAR is a joint celebration of reading celebrated across the entire country. And it is a pleasure to witness across school, with everyone absorbed in a shared love of stories.

In line with our mission to become an environment where we read for pleasure, we have recently become the proud owners of a book vending machine. The vending machine is there to reward students for all their hard work, earning them books as prizes for their achievement. The golden tokens can be awarded to students for outstanding literacy contributions or for those who impress us in the weekly competitions and challenges.

Further details about these strategies and supporting your child with literacy can be found on our website: <https://queensmeadschool.org.uk/our-school/literacy/>

Mr Fellows, Teacher of Drama and English

On the hunt for Jack the Ripper!

On the 17th November 2021, 51 students from Year 9 travelled to the East End of London, to go on one of the legendary tours around Whitechapel, to see for themselves the area where Jack the Ripper brutally murdered his victims.

In the autumn of 1888, he stalked the slums of Whitechapel in the East End of London, mercilessly taking the lives of five women within a three-month period.

It was a very cold night, when we arrived at Tower Hill to meet our tour guide, whose knowledge of London was extensive. He took us all around Whitechapel and, at each spot, he showed photos of what the area looked like then - there were still some original buildings where some of the victims drank or lodged.

It was a really interesting tour, and helped to give our students a real insight into the dark and twisted history of Whitechapel during the Victorian era.

Queensmead students were exemplary ambassadors for the school, showing lots of interest and enthusiasm.

Thanks to all of the Year 9 students who came. I'm looking forward to running the tour again next year with the next cohort. Look out for the information in 2022!

Mrs Oakley, Senior Cover Supervisor



Above, Queensmead students, on the Jack the Ripper Tour, engrossed in the history

Below, headline news - Jack the Ripper makes the news!



The most notorious serial killer in history.



December 2021

Celebrating our diversity

The dictionary defines diversity as:

“the practise or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc”

For me, diversity means respecting others even if they are a bit different from you. It also means to appreciate other cultures and backgrounds and make people feel welcome.

This is exactly what Queensmead School is all about. With the new ‘Diversity Club’, Ms Bhudia and a huge number of students are making sure everyone feels included and appreciated.

Diversity Club has already made multiple changes, such as ensuring a prayer space is available at break and lunchtime in M26 and room 60. There are two rooms for boys and girls. Additionally, we have recently celebrated key events, such as Diwali; teachers dressed up in traditional clothing, there was delicious Diwali food in the canteen and the foyer was beautifully decorated with LED lights.

On top of this, Diversity Club has several new and exciting projects coming up soon, such as addressing important topics in PD (Personal Development) lessons and assemblies.

Please come to M9, on Thursday lunchtimes, to join us, making our school as diverse as possible!

Trisha D, Year 10 student

DNA

It runs in our blood
In our veins
Starts with a D, ends with an A
No matter how small,
It makes us special
And who we are.

Doesn't matter if you're identical twins
A strand can make you different
It doesn't matter what's the colour of your skin
We're all equivalent

Let's celebrate what makes me “me”
And share the beauty
Of our similarities.

Trisha D, Year 10 student.

Let's share our similarities
and celebrate our differences!



December 2021

Reawakening the joy of maths!

For the first time, over 40 students participated in the national celebration, 'Maths Week England' in November, an event organised to celebrate and spread the joy of mathematics! The event runs annually and, this year, over 4000 schools took part in both live and virtual events and competitions.

Our students, from Year 7 to Year 11, entered competitions, advertised on posters and SatchelOne. One task was a virtual escape room - it proved very popular! Almost everyone cracked the code to 'escape'. The puzzle sheet then proved a greater challenge: students had to complete Yahuko puzzles, something many had not seen before. If you fancy a go, scan the QR code below!

All successful entrants received a participation certificate and a reward for their efforts, and two students received a prize for successfully completing the hardest puzzles.

***Watch out for Maths Week England 2022
- it will be an even better event!***

Mrs Morrissey, *Teacher of Maths*

MATHS WEEK ENGLAND



MATHS TOGETHER



Catching up on lost time: life after Covid

As a school, we like to ensure that we are always working to the highest standard and we believe that extra after school tutoring can help our students reach their full potential. Not only do we provide extra support for students, but our support comes from our own sixth formers.

We offer tutoring for our core subjects - Maths and English - for our younger students in KS3 and KS4. As students we find it helpful that we are being supported by older students. It's inspiring to see where they've ended up and how well they are doing and we appreciate the time they have taken out to help and support us.

Some Year 12 students are also assisting students in lessons as well to ensure we are given the opportunity to have as much support as possible.

If you are struggling with Maths or English, find out how the school can help to give you some extra support!

Contact office@gmschool.org.uk to find out more.

Lily-Grace B, *Year 9 student*



December 2021

The Library: our home away from home

The library is a wonderful place to go with your friends and there is a diverse range of books to choose from. Combined with a comfortable environment, it truly is a place to immerse yourself in a good book.

It is run by Mrs Barry, our wonderful librarian, who is able to help with homework, revision and anything academic. There are also multiple sixth formers who come in regularly to help out.

Mrs Barry regularly gives out her famous and delicious hot chocolate on a weekly basis meaning we can work in a calming and relaxing environment. It is usually open until 4:30, giving us plenty of time to get homework completed so we can go home and relax!

Many studies show working on homework at school is more effective and students are more motivated to do homework at school rather than at home. We can sit with our friends and work together making it much more fun and exciting; we can socialise whilst working! This is a wonderful place for GCSE students as Mrs Barry provides many GCSE resources to help students study and revise for their GCSE exams.



The library website tells you everything you need to know about the library, including upcoming events. Mrs Barry is thinking about starting a kindle club in the library so make sure to keep visiting the library website to find out more about that!

Bianca-Maria N, Year 8 student

The range of resources on offer, and the calm environment available



Community spirit

In the UK, more than 14 million people are living in poverty – including 4.5 million children.

As a school, we believe it isn't right that anyone should be left hungry or living in extreme poverty. Therefore, to make a difference, from Monday 8th November until Wednesday 24th November, Queensmead School ran a food bank to support local people. It is especially necessary, particularly in these uncertain times, when things are even more difficult and more challenging for families. As a school, students and teachers have been generously donating food, including UHT milk and tins of soup, cans of baked beans, rice pudding and small packets of rice and pasta.



Above, the food bank in action

Above right - the food, bagged and ready for distribution



We are immensely proud of our students and staff, for collecting such a huge amount of food, and for supporting those who are in need, and grateful for their generosity.

Poverty and hunger is such an enormous problem around the world, but we hope that we have been able to take this small step and make a difference towards solving it.

Mrs Bamrah, Teacher of English



December 2021

Knitting together: raising money for a worthy festive cause

On Friday 10th December, people all over the UK wore Christmas jumpers and donated £1 for 'Save the Children'. And, at Queensmead School, students from all years and teachers wore Christmas jumpers over their normal school clothes to help support children who are struggling in poverty and need money for their education, food and medicine.

Save the Children is an honourable charity which has helped a number of children across the world from poverty. In 2020, they helped 45 million children get the medicine, food and education they needed. Also, as COVID-19 turned lives upside down, they provided much-needed medical supplies, helping thousands of households to access clean water and soap. They also worked with 2.9m children, providing access to distance learning.



Save the Children

We were thrilled to raise over £350, by staff and students wearing their jazzy jumpers!

Morning line up was a sea of colourful knitwear, with some staff and pupils wearing hand-customised jumpers, due to our emphasis on being eco-friendly. It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces donating money at the school gates and the colourful jumpers certainly brightened up classrooms on what was quite a dull, typically British winter's day. A special thank you to the Charity Committee for helping collect and count the donations.

Mrs Antony, *Teacher of Performing Arts*



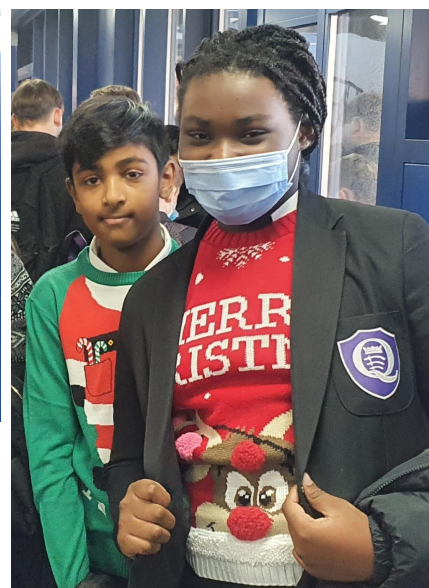
In addition, students and teachers were encouraged not to buy a brand new jumper this year, but rather to wear one from a charity shop or wear a second-hand one. This helps the environment as we are recycling old clothes and not buying new ones. As a bonus, you get to save some money!

Not only are we saving our own money, but buying clothes from a charity shop supports local businesses and helps the community become a better place.

Trisha D, *Year 10 student*



Above, Shane in Year 10, and above right, Peace and Kieran (both Year 7) all proudly wearing their festive jumpers



December 2021



Record turn-out: Post-16 Open Evening

After switching to an online options process last year, due to government restrictions for Covid-19, we were thrilled to be able to open our doors for our annual Post-16 Open Evening this November. We were able to welcome over 200 students to our school site on the 25th November.

Needless to say, Queensmead was looking its best, with the newly opened block in action, and every department had set out their stall to appeal to prospective Post-16 students, both from Queensmead itself and from other schools. The atmosphere was buzzing and full of students eagerly asking questions about courses to weigh up their options.

Students were able to visit each department to explore the subjects, finding out how they differ to the GCSE courses and what the expectations are. They were able to speak to both teachers and students, finding out about the specifications and the experience of the course from the students themselves.

Mr Gallagher, Head of Year 13, and Mrs Howells, the school careers advisor, were on hand to discuss all things UCAS and careers related, and our Post 16 prefect teams were on hand to guide visitors around the school, sharing their experience of Post 16 life.

Mr Kavanagh, Senior Assistant Headteacher

Scan here for our
Post-16 application
form for 2022:

Prospective students
will meet with the
leadership group in
the new year to
discuss their options.



Above, A Level Product Design displays in the new workshops and the Performing Arts welcome board

Bottom, the view of the new block from across the quiet green, in the moonlight



December 2021



Our school spirit thrives: Post 16 Open Evening

An unforgettable evening! The Post-16 Open Evening on Thursday 25th November was a spectacular night for both our prospective students and the Sixth Form team. Although, we must admit, we have dodged a bullet as luckily the event was able to commence ahead of the new Omicron variant!

"It was a good opportunity for sixth formers to advocate and show younger members of our community our Sixth Form."

- Besian, Year 12 Values Team.

"It was a lively evening and I feel that Queensmead as a school was able to shine; many students were excited to apply to the Sixth Form."

- Hana, Year 12 Values Team.

"Thanks to this I am sure that Sixth Form will be a delight"

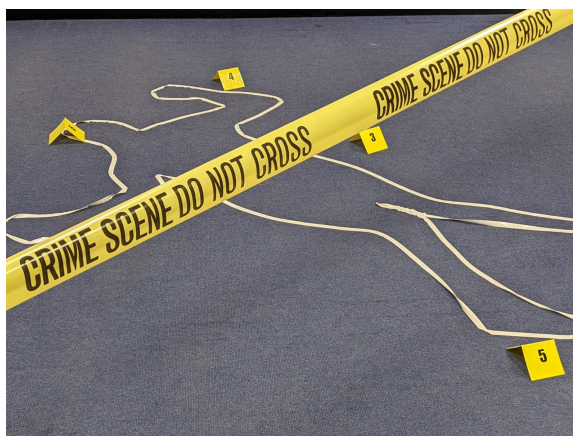
- a Year 11 student, excited to leave school uniforms behind!

For many Year 11 students, the open evening helped to solidify their future at Queensmead, with both internal and external visitors excited to become part of the Sixth Form society. The varied departments sold their subjects with great enthusiasm, persuading uncertain students and providing clarity on the A Level curriculum. Staff had even set up impressive displays and activities, ranging from fingerprint retrieval in Criminology, child play activities in CPLD and a pyramid of plastic cups representing Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the Psychology department. We are sure that such activities even had parents wishing they could go back to school!

A huge thank you to the staff and the sixth form students who helped everything run smoothly. Even the cold weather could not stop the evening from being a success!

Hana, Jagoda and Harry, Year 12 students

Above, under the microscope in the Science department
Bottom, main block and the covered way; the Criminology department 'crime scene'; the new welcome banners



Reaching new heights in sport

Altitude training is commonly undertaken by Olympic athletes, to prepare and optimise their bodies for the stresses and strains of intense competitions. This is something our Year 12 and Year 13 students are becoming all-too-familiar with, as they too have given it a go. But what is it?



It is the practice of training at high elevations. In sports, high altitude typically means at least 1500 metres above sea level. At this elevation, the air is thinner and the fall in pressure makes it harder for oxygen to diffuse into your lungs. A workout will feel more difficult, and you'll get tired more quickly. However, the idea is that high altitude training forces your body to adapt to the lack of oxygen; it creates more red blood cells enabling oxygen to be carried despite the conditions. In turn, this can improve performance when you return to lower levels as the greater levels of red blood cells prevent you from tiring as quickly.

As it is a topic on both the BTEC Sport and A level PE courses, we were lucky enough to be able to put theory into practice, taking our students to visit the Altitude Centre in London. They experienced the effects of altitude on the body first-hand, completing a 30-minute, high intensity interval training session, either on a bike or a treadmill at 2700m above sea level, where there is only 15% oxygen levels. Each student wore a heart rate monitor linked to a screen to track how their body was responding.



A massive well done to all the students for their efforts, and thank you to the Altitude Centre for having us - and putting the students through their paces!

Ms Reed, Head of Year 11 and Teacher of PE



December 2021

Top tips for keeping safe online, from our e-safety ambassadors

With online shopping on the increase, and people using social media more and more, e-safety is essential.

Our e-safety ambassadors have been learning all about it, creating posters to advertise the information and to raise awareness about online safety. In particular, they have focused on how to manage and report cyberbullying, and the problems and precautions to take when using social media - they have been learning to manage their digital footprint!

Here are their top tips, for keeping safe - how to avoid online scams, how to identify phishing emails, and, just generally, how to be safe online:

- *Be careful who you meet online*
- *Keep privacy settings on*
- *Choose strong passwords and change them regularly*
- *Keep antivirus programs up-to-date*
- *Be careful what and how much you post - what could others do with the information?*
- *Practise safe browsing - be mindful of which websites you visit*
- *Contact companies directly about any suspicious requests*

Mrs Young, Teacher of Computing



Posters by Maha, Year 8; Aksharan, Year 9; Heaven, Year 9; Nimi, Year 9; and Anjalee, Year 12

