



INSPIRE
BELIEVE
ACHIEVE

The Oaks Academy Newsletter December 2024

Headteachers Update



We are reaching the end of another busy term. We continue to build on our 'good' Ofsted grading and report from May this year - it is worth noting that no other secondary school in Cheshire East has a higher overall grade. We are doing this through prioritising academic excellence. One of our key priorities for this year is to further embed literacy and oracy and a love of reading. We have a strong programme for literacy, and this permeates all lessons and the life of the school. We also have highly skilled practitioners to support literacy enrichment. Please do encourage your children to read at home and foster that love of reading. Do visit the Crewe library at the Lifestyle Centre in town where you can join for free to borrow a good read. We have some great reads in our library too.

It is great to see the high standards of recent performances at school. These have included a really moving Remembrance Service and the school's production of 'Don't Be A Scrooge This Christmas'. Our pupils are being increasingly recognised in the community and we were delighted to learn that 3 of our pupils, Ella, Ermela and Bethany, represented our school in winning the Formula 1 STEM project involving the design and manufacture of a scale model

F1 car, that is gas powered, launched and raced down a 20m track. Our team had to learn about key scientific, engineering, technology and mathematical principles to build the winning car, and in so doing beat all the other schools from Crewe, Nantwich, Sandbach and Congleton to win the top prize.

I join all the staff here in wishing you a happy Christmas and restful holiday. As ever, many thanks for your ongoing support.

Peter Kingdom

Headteacher

Whole School Focus: Literacy

Whole School Reading Structure


It is vitally important that children are read to as they track along in a text: doing so allows them to begin to recognise words which might appear differently when written down when spoken aloud. Once children can recognise these words on the page, their focus can be to try and decode and comprehend the words, rather than trying to work out how it sounds and if they recognise it. In 2023-2024 we introduced a whole school reading strategy to be implemented whenever a text is read in lessons across school. This has created a consistent approach to how teachers deliver reading, how pupils are expected to approach a text and ways in which we decode complex texts. This structure is present in lessons when reading is encountered. To begin with, the teacher acts as the model for reading, demonstrating fluency which pupils track along in the text. As they do, they identify any vocabulary they do not understand, which is discussed after the initial, teacher led read. Pupils then re-read the text, giving a short title to each paragraph to help them identify key points and structure of the text. Pupils then summarise the whole text into one or two sentences to show comprehension.

Over time this process should become automatic for our pupils. We have already seen an impact, with more and more pupils actively engaging with a text instead of falling at the first barrier they encounter.


At home we ask, if possible, that if you see your child reading, please take the opportunity to join them, and read out loud to them.

M. Barlow

Curriculum Team Leader - English Faculty



Approaching an Extract



1. Your teacher will read the text. Highlight all the vocabulary you don't understand. Be prepared to read out loud if called upon.
2. Write the definitions of the words you do not understand in your book.
3. Now read the text individually to yourself.
4. As you read, give each paragraph a title that summarises the main point of that paragraph.
5. Write a 2-sentence summary of what the text is about.

Faculty Focus: Performance and Vocational

This year the Performance and Vocational Faculty are working on some exciting developments in our curriculum and teaching and learning processes. This year we have three main areas of focus: modelling, questioning and adaptive teaching strategies. We are developing these areas across all subjects in the faculty.

Modelling

We are currently working on developing the following types of modelling:

- Task Stage - modelling different stages of a task that pupils need to complete independently as well as the end product
- Scaffolding - providing learning stage appropriate modelling using the principle of 'I do, we, do, you do'
- Metacognitive - modelling how to think to complete a task - interpreting information, applying knowledge to a practical context or solving a problem through using questions such as 'what am I doing?', 'why am I doing this?', 'are there any other ways I could do this?', 'how could I make this even better?', 'what can I do if ...?', 'are there any parts that don't sound/read well?', 'what can I try instead?', 'I've realised this looks repetitive - what could I do to give it more variety?'
- Live Modelling - considering the stage of learning of the pupils to provide the appropriate level of support for each pupil so they can access the same task

Questioning

Next term we are going to start looking at different questioning techniques and frameworks such as the following:

- Question starters such as what, where, when, which, who, why and how
- Questions that challenge the creation of questions and responses to develop creative and critical thinking
- Questions in categories that involve knowledge, comprehension, analysis, application, synthesis or evaluation
- Questions to consider different perspectives

Adaptive Teaching Strategies

We are continuing to develop our adaptive teaching strategies such as the following:

- Visuals - providing visuals via the board or projector screen
- Small Steps - giving explanations in small, distinct and manageable steps
- Acronyms - using acronyms to help students to visualise lists
- Pause and Repeat - when giving directions, leaving a pause between each step so the pupil can carry out the process in their mind. Have pupils repeat the directions

- Flash Cards - using flash cards to help pupils recall knowledge
- Notes and Coloured Pens - having the pupils take notes and use coloured pens to highlight
- Concise - being concise with verbal information reducing the number of words used

How can you support your child with their learning?

There are several ways you can support your child with their learning in our subjects:

- Encourage your child to discuss their learning in each subject with you. This process will help them to recall key concepts, knowledge and skills they are developing
- Support your child to complete their homework on Satchel:One to consolidate their learning
- Encourage your child to practise the skills they are developing whether this be learning a piece on an instrument or their voice, learning a piece of dialogue, working on a sport or developing a computer based skill

Enrichment

We also have a number of exciting enrichment opportunities on offer to pupils at lunchtimes and after school. We are particularly proud this term of our Remembrance Service and 'Don't Be A Scrooge This Christmas', both of which contained high quality performances by soloists, our Choir and drama extracts. We are also proud of our pupils who have participated in sporting fixtures and the Rocket League E-Sports Tournament.

E. Wright

Curriculum Team Leader - Performance and Vocational Faculty

“There is no doubt that **creativity** is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns.”

Edward de Bono



Remembrance Service

On Monday 11th November over 30 pupils took part in our annual Remembrance Service. Our Choir performed 'A Thousand Years' and 'How Do I Say Goodbye?', Mythily B performed 'Perfect' on the piano, some of our Year 11 Drama pupils performed a piece of theatre about accepting individuality and women in war and Eliza S and Brooklyn H, our Head Students, gave readings.

300 pupils from Years 7 and 8 watched the Remembrance Service giving them the opportunity to understand the importance of this national event and pay their respects to the people who have died in wars around the world.

Miss Wright said of the Remembrance Service 'our pupils have worked really hard since September preparing for this. Their performances were high quality and very moving in a service that enabled everyone to reflect, pay their respects and share the importance of having respect and acceptance for everyone'.

E. Wright

Curriculum Team Leader - Performance and Vocational Faculty





Don't Be A Scrooge This Christmas

On the evening of Thursday 12th December we held our Christmas Service called 'Don't Be A Scrooge This Christmas' to an appreciate audience of over 200 people. This involved 30 pupils from Years 7-11 and was staged as a Christmas Service in the style of a musical theatre production. Set in 18th century Victorian England, this combined singing by our Choir, acting and readings. It told the story of Scrooge, a greedy and miserable character, who was shown the true meaning of Christmas. The performance featured a range of songs from traditional carols to modern favourites and our message was to celebrate the arts and share the importance of kindness to all.

In September we held auditions for the principal characters. We were impressed by the number of pupils who auditioned for these roles and the quality of their auditions.

Our principal cast consisted of the following pupils:

Jonah W - Scrooge

Sienna-May N - Narrator

Pola H - Reader

Oliver I-B - Reader

Evie-Lei O - Reader

Rutendo M - Solo Singer

Our ensemble cast consisted of the following pupils:

Hannah A

Courtney B

Mia C

Leah-Marie D

Chelsea F

Jasmine G

Chrystabelle G

Shelbie H

Pola H

Bronwyn H

Oliver I-B

Maisie J

Rutendo M

Sienna-May N

Evie-Lei O

Maisie O

Bianca P

Georgia P

Courtney R

Maisie S

Dylan S

Ella-May T

Tommy T

Teegan W

Victoria W

Jonah W

To take our performance to the next level we hired professional lighting from Dave D Events, purchased a range of props and made costumes for our pupils to wear, resulting in a fully immersive performance.

Two of our former pupils, Lewis Cartlidge and Rhys Griffiths, came back to run the sound and lighting on the day.

Miss Wright said of the performance 'the pupils have worked really hard since September preparing for this. It has required a lot of commitment, dedication and resilience with lunchtime rehearsals, after school rehearsals and a weekend rehearsal. What we have achieved by combining Music and Drama and adding lighting, props and costumes is a professional performance that celebrates a range of art forms. Our pupils have gained so much from this experience and should be really proud of what they have achieved'.

E. Wright

Curriculum Team Leader - Performance and Vocational Faculty









F1 in Schools

A team of young innovators from The Oaks Academy claimed victory in our local F1 in Schools competition. The team, called Team TOAR (The Oaks Academy Racing), triumphed over entries from other local schools, showcasing their exceptional engineering, teamwork and problem-solving skills.

The competition, which was held at Crewe UTC in November, required participants to design a scaled-down F1 car using CAD software, manufacture the model with precision tools and race the cars on a specially designed track. Teams also had to present a business plan, create a marketing campaign, and demonstrate their knowledge of the STEM principles behind Formula 1 engineering.

Team TOAR impressed the judges with their innovative design and attention to detail. Their car, which boasted cutting edge aerodynamics and advanced materials, outpaced rivals in speed tests while also scoring high marks for design, sustainability and the team's promotional pitch.

'We're ecstatic to win' said Ella G the team's captain. 'This experience has taught us more than we ever expected. We learned about engineering, teamwork and how to think like professionals in a competitive industry'.

The team's victory also earned them a spot in the global finals, where they will compete for the ultimate title against top teams from around the world. The victory highlights the growing importance of STEM education and the incredible talent being nurtured in schools across the country. We are extremely proud of our F1 team and are excited to compete again next year.

S. Weaver

Curriculum Team Leader - Art, Design and Technology Faculty





The Anne Frank Trust

On Wednesday 27th November and Thursday 28th November a group of Year 9 pupils were selected by Mr Jessup to work with the Anne Frank Trust. The pupils worked incredibly well with an external guest speaker and we are very proud of their enthusiasm and sensitivity. The holocaust, antisemitism and prejudice are difficult topics to discuss. Pupils clearly showed resilience in this session and we are proud of their success. Look at the work they have produced. Well done to all involved.

B. Jessup

History Teacher



XENOPHOBIA:

Definition
xenophobia is the discrimination against/towards foreigners
people that are born in another country

examples of xenophobia:
- while American citizen feeling resentful towards white immigrants, as (e.g) they believe they are stealing jobs.
- making fun of another person's nationality.
- also includes accents

ways to stop xenophobia:
* celebrate other cultures
* call out bigotry and hate speech

refugees don't make our country less safe

PHOEBE SHEPHERD




HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

How would you feel?
 Not being safe out in the streets alone
 Being attacked for being gay
 The things that happen to me not taken seriously
 Being drafted into things I never wanted to do
 What am I good for, thought I was good for
 Being a so called object for the mens enjoyment
 just want to go to the streets alone

How would you feel?
 If you were gay
 Being told to get a job
 Tell me how you would feel
 If I'm gay I want to be a doctor
 I'm gay, fine of my own, fine of prying eyes. It would all be lies.

How would you feel?
 Being told to get a job
 Tell me how you would feel
 If I'm gay I want to be a doctor
 I'm gay, fine of my own, fine of prying eyes. It would all be lies.

How would you feel?
 Being told to get a job
 Tell me how you would feel
 If I'm gay I want to be a doctor
 I'm gay, fine of my own, fine of prying eyes. It would all be lies.

DISABILITY IS NOT A BARRIER



DISCRIMINATION IS.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

"a woman with a voice is by definition, a strong woman."

"this is no land to be ruled as women complete!"

"can there a woman stand up for herself and stand up for all women."

DONT BE
 Transphobic
 racist
 Ableist
 Sexist

FEMINISM

giving women access to the same opportunities as men and sharing information about their bodies and personal lives in a way that is safe and respectful to all women. Date of 19th century with men.

These women say they are engaged and feel better a majority of their male counterparts who are not. Or a card state who was found to be a racist against women. These women are superior and have a sense of pride in their accomplishments. These women are not turning of national attention rights for them. In response they say they're owning up to men - and they're encouraging other women to join them.

Ella and Emelia!!!



Be Equal So We Don't Need a sequel !!!

Cyber Missions To Space With Year 8

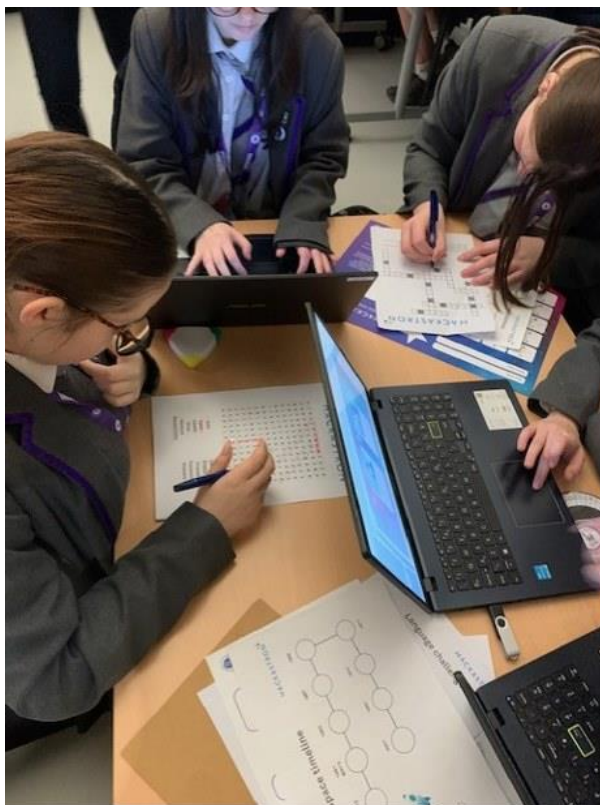
On a chilly December morning, several Year 8 pupils embarked on an exciting adventure to the renowned Jodrell Bank Observatory, an iconic scientific site nestled in the heart of Cheshire. This trip was part of the school's STEM initiative, designed to inspire young minds and spark an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The trip to Jodrell Bank was run by In4Group on behalf of GCHQ. It was based around the idea of getting more females into a career in cybersecurity. Pupils teamed up to tackle an exciting Space themed cyber mission, racing against the clock to complete a series of challenges. There was also a most inspiring video showing the impact of females in the Apollo 11 Mission, including Katherine Johnson who did the handwritten calculations that resulted in Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walking on the moon.

The pupils thoroughly enjoyed their day with a number of them looking forward to careers in cybersecurity in the future.

H. Keeling

Assistant Curriculum Team Leader - Science Faculty





Rocket League E-Sports Tournament

Over the past six weeks we have proudly participated in a Rocket League E-Sports competition hosted by Cheshire College South and West. Held after school every Tuesday this tournament showcased the impressive gaming talents of our pupils. Representing the school with enthusiasm and teamwork were Riley T, Harvey S, Tino DC, Brandon T, Jayden-Lee S, Zack B, and Jake G. The tournament, designed to foster competitive gaming skills, involved multiple schools and followed a league-style format. Matches were evaluated based on wins/losses, game differentials, and goals scored. The dedication and commitment of our pupils has been excellent and we are eagerly waiting to hear which teams will advance to the next stage of the competition.

Essential Skills for Successful Gamers

Competing in E-Sports like Rocket League requires more than just quick reflexes - it demands a combination of physical, mental, and interpersonal skills. Here are the key skills every successful gamer should possess:

1. Strategic Thinking

- Players must anticipate opponents' moves, plan strategies, and adapt quickly to changing situations
- Understanding the game's mechanics and tactics is crucial for staying ahead in competitive matches

2. Teamwork and Communication

- Many E-Sports games, including Rocket League, are team-based. Players need strong communication skills to coordinate with teammates effectively
- Sharing strategies, providing real-time updates, and maintaining team morale are critical to success

3. Quick Reflexes and Hand-Eye Coordination

- Speed and precision are essential in fast-paced games where split-second decisions can make the difference
- A well-honed reaction time and accurate control of inputs ensure players perform at their best

4. Focus and Concentration

- Gamers need the ability to stay focused for extended periods, avoiding distractions to execute strategies effectively
- Concentration helps players monitor multiple aspects of the game, like positioning, timing, and opponent behaviour

5. Problem-Solving and Adaptability

- In-game scenarios often require players to think on their feet, solving problems or adjusting tactics mid-match
- Successful gamers are flexible and creative, finding solutions under pressure

6. Resilience and Emotional Control

- Maintaining a positive mindset, even after setbacks, is key to staying competitive
- Players must manage stress, frustration, and excitement, maintaining focus throughout the match

7. Technical Knowledge

- Understanding the gaming platform, hardware, and software ensures smooth gameplay
- Gamers often optimise their equipment and settings to gain a competitive edge

8. Continuous Learning and Improvement

- Great players are always analysing their performance, learning from mistakes, and seeking ways to improve
- Watching professional matches and studying opponents can provide insights and inspiration

9. Time Management

- Balancing practice sessions with other commitments is important for overall success
- Discipline and effective scheduling allow players to improve their skills without neglecting other responsibilities

10. Sportsmanship and Professionalism

- Respect for team mates, opponents, and the gaming community creates a positive environment
- Successful gamers demonstrate integrity, humility and a willingness to help others grow

E-Sports is more than just fun - it is a test of multiple skills that players can apply to other areas of life, from teamwork and communication to strategic thinking and resilience

M. Gherghiceanu

Teacher of ICT and Maths







Lille Trip

On Friday 6th December a group of 52 pupils from Years 8-11 and 6 staff set off for the Christmas Markets in Lille, France. During the trip we went to Le Petit Musee De La Gaufre to watch a demonstration and sample Belgium waffles being made, visited the markets which were full of festive lights, went to Metro Bowling for bespoke pizzas cooked in a pizza oven, ice cream and we had a whole trip bowling tournament. We also went to Euro Lille Shopping Centre to visit the amazing shops and cafes. It was a fantastic trip with lots of memorable experiences and lifetime memories made in a country some of our pupils hadn't visited before. Mrs Lockett is already busy planning another Christmas Market Trip for 2026.

N. Lockett

Culture and Attendance Manager





Careers

Year 11 Work Experience

This half term we launched our Work Experience Opportunity for all Year 11 pupils. This program is designed to help pupils gain valuable insights into the working world, develop key skills, and explore potential career interests.

Key Details

- **Dates:** 17th – 21st February 2025 (all placements will need to be between 2-5 days)
- **Participation:** Optional
- **Placements:** Self-sourced by pupils
- **Requirements:** All relevant paperwork must be completed and signed by pupils, parents/guardians, and the placement provider.

Any pupil wishing to take part has been issued with a self-placement form which needs to be returned by **Friday 10th January**.

Post 16 Destinations

We closely monitor the applications of our pupils to post 16 colleges and sixth forms. Over the last few weeks, we have had a number of local providers into school to talk to Year 11 about their options when they leave The Oaks Academy.

As a result of legislation introduced in September 2013, the law now requires that young people continue in education, employment or training until the age of 18. This change was introduced to improve the career and life prospects for young people.

There are various advantages to remaining in education or training for longer:

- Young people can develop a greater range of skills
- The likelihood of unemployment is significantly reduced
- An increase in earning potential
- Offers the opportunity for young people who are disengaged with mainstream education to develop new skills in an alternative setting

We want our pupils to ensure that they make the right choices and that this is grounded in research, hence the exposure to a wide variety of providers. Places for post 16 course are competitive and as such we recommend that pupils submit their applications by Christmas. They are allowed to apply for as many places as they like, and we ask that if they are intending on applying for an apprenticeship or one of the armed services that they submit an application as a back-up. It is not until August when they have to make up their mind which option they would like to follow. Without this application they could be at risk of missing out on a place on their preferred course and provider.

To complete applications you will need to go to the website of the relevant provider and submit an application. If you would like support with this then please feel free to contact Mrs Abberley to arrange a time to complete this together.

Parent Forum Meeting 10th December 2024

This half term we held our first parent forum meeting for the academic year on Tuesday 10th December. The focus of the meeting was supporting post 16 education and higher education destinations. The transition beyond secondary school is a pivotal moment for every young person. Whether they are considering an apprenticeship, or university, it is vital that they are equipped with the knowledge, tools, and aspirations to achieve their full potential.

During the meeting we:

- Explored the options available for post 16 education and beyond

- Provided an overview of the application process for colleges, sixth forms, apprenticeships, and universities
- Discussed how parents/guardians can play an active role in encouraging and supporting their child's ambitions
- Shared insights on resources and opportunities to make higher education accessible
- Addressed any questions you may have about how to help your child aim high and succeed in their chosen pathway

We believe that a collaborative approach between the school, pupils and their families is essential to fostering confidence and motivation during this crucial phase. Please see the presentation which was shared on the evening and if you would like any further information please contact Mrs Abberley.

[Parent Forum Presentation 10th December 2024](#)

E. Abberley

Assistant Headteacher - Community and Personal Development



Calendar Dates

Here are some upcoming key dates:

- Thursday 16th January - Year 11 Progress Evening
- Wednesday 29th January - SEND Parent Meeting

- Thursday 30th January - Year 9 Progress Evening
- Friday 7th February-Sunday 9th February - Art Residential
- Thursday 13th February - Year 9 Options Evening